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The Harleian MS 7334

of

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

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THE

Harleian MS 7334

OF

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

410 11
98

LONDON:

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MDCCCLXXXV.

TO

The Lovers of Chaucer,

PAST, PRESENT,

AND

TO COME.

PR
1901
A3
no. 73

First Series,
LXXIII.

R. Clay and Sons, Bungay, Suffolk.

FOREWORDS.

When thinking in 1868 what were the six best MSS of the Canterbury Tales to print in my *Six-Text* for the Chaucer Society, the Harleian 7334 was of course one of the first that occurd to me. But as it had been printed twice by the late Thomas Wright—in 3 vols. for the Percy Society, and then in cheap double-column,—then by Mr. Jephson for the late Robert Bell's Series of English Poets (publisht by Jn. Wm. Parker), and a fourth time by my friend Dr. Richard Morris for George Bell's Aldine Series,[1] I decided to let these four printings suffice for the Harleian 7334, and so get a fresh MS (which proved to be of the B-type) into print among my Six. It was not a wise decision, as there are too many of the Corpus or B-type already in the Six-Text, and I have unluckily filld up gaps in the better A-type MSS—Ellesmere, Hengwrt, and Cambridge—with extracts from B-type ones, though in several cases the Christchurch A-type MS was open to me. But when I started Chaucer work, I didn't know even the little that the course of it has taught me. (Still, as investigation of the niceties of Early English goes on, probably no student will blame me for having printed one more MS of *The Canterbury Tales.* And though collaters' curses for the amount of labour I've thrown on them have already fallen thickly upon me, I always assure these Balaams that they'll bless me when their work is done.)

[1] Mr. George Bell meant at first simply to reprint Pickering's text of Chaucer's Poetical Works, but, on my strong remonstrance as to its badness, Mr. Bell agreed to engage Dr. Morris to re-edit the whole from MSS.

Well, when Editors began to edit Chaucer's Tales, and wanted to know what the reading of Harleian 7334 is, they often found some italics in Dr. Morris's text, showing that he'd alterd his MS; and as his publisher wouldn't let him give various readings, a reference to the MS became necessary. This was a great bore, specially when a man livd in Germany or America. Moreover, my friend Prof. Child meant his foundation-Essay on Chaucer's language and metre to be based on the MS Harl. 7334, and not on any Editor's changes of it, whether right or wrong. So it gradually became plain that a simple print of this MS must be done for the Chaucer Society. And here accordingly it is. It is as accurate as twice reading of every line with the MS by me can make it; but no doubt little slips have happend; they always will befall.

The MS is dear to the soul of Henry Bradshaw and all concernd in the due order of the Canterbury Tales, because it has, at the end of the First Fragment of Group B—the Man of Law's Tale—the proper Man-of-Law-Shipman Link, which should hook it on to the Second Fragment that the Shipman's Tale heads. No Shipman's Tale and Fragment 2 however follow it—but instead, Group D,—Wife, Friar, Summoner,—then Groups E, F, G, C,—and after these, the wanting Second Fragment of B, though without its genuine End-Link.

The MS is of an independent type, not falling into either the edited A-type or the inferior B-type to which the Corpus, Petworth, and Lansdowne belong, in the main. It is perhaps, by a few years, the oldest extant MS of the Tales, and contains an excellent text, tho' its occasional plurals in *us* and its past tenses and participles in *ud*, together with its loss of 608 lines out of Group F (lines 617—1223, or 8 leaves[1] of the MS from l. 271 of the Squire's Tale, all the Squire-Miller Link, and then lines

[1] The MS has thirty-eight lines to a page, or 608 lines in the 16 pages.

1—487 of the Franklin's Tale, p. 354-5 below, Harl. paging), render it less fitted for the basis of a complete edition of *The Canterbury Tales* than the fine illuminated Ellesmere MS.[1] Moreover, Harl. 7334 sticks 8 spurious lines—2004 b, c; 2012 b, c; 2037 b, c; 2048 b, c,—p. $\frac{293-4}{253-4}$, into the Summoner's Tale, and one, l. 592 (p. $\frac{495}{353}$) into the Squire's Tale. It also has not 2 lines, A 252 b, c, in the General Prolog, p. 8; 2 in the Cook's Tale, A 4375-6, p. 127; and 8 at the end of the Cook's Tale, A 4415—4422, p. 128; 7 lines in the Knight's Tale, A 2013-18, p. 58, A 2958, p. 84; 2 lines in the Miller's Tale, A 3721-2, p. 106; 2 in the Reeve-Cook Link (A 4355, 4358, p. 125-6; 4 lines alterd into two); one line in the Man of Law's Tale, B 417, p. $\frac{143}{169}$, and five at the end of the Man of Law's End-Link, B 1186—1190, p. $\frac{167}{193}$; thirty lines in the Wife's Preamble, D 575—584, 605—612, 619—626, 717—720, p. $\frac{350-351}{210-211}$, $\frac{354}{214}$; eight in the Second Nun's Tale, G 155, 210—216, p. $\frac{532}{372}$, $\frac{534}{374}$; the 8 genuine Ellesmere lines[2] in the Franklin's Tale, 1455-6, 1493-8, p. $\frac{521-2}{362-3}$, besides leaving out 2 lines (2356-7, p. $\frac{474}{333}$) in the Merchant's Tale,[3] four (299-300, 305-6, p. $\frac{312}{424}$) in the Doctor-Pardoner Link, two in the Pardoner's Tale, C 478-9 (p. $\frac{318}{430}$); five in the Shipman's Tale, B 1355 (p. $\frac{172}{449}$) and B 1376-9 (p. $\frac{173}{450}$); one in Sir Thopas, B 1995 (p. $\frac{194}{471}$); about a dozen of prose (trebles) in Melibe,[4] one stanza of 8 in the Monk's Tale, B 3213-20 (p. $\frac{257}{534}$), four lines in the Nun's Priest's Tale, 4136-7 (p. $\frac{286}{563}$), 4478-9 (p. $\frac{296}{573}$), and all its End Link, 16 lines, (for which see p. 694,) and about 23 treble ones in the Parson's Tale: see the gaps in pages $\frac{593-684}{599-690}$ as you

[1] The Ellesmere has not the Man-of-Law-Shipman Link which Harl. 7334 has.

[2] No other MS yet examind by me has these 8 lines.

[3] Lines like these, due to the scribe's jumping from one 'sight' to the other, might well have been dotted differently in the print, so as to show the jump.

[4] B 2252-3 (p. $\frac{205}{405}$), 2264 (p. $\frac{209}{486}$), 2432, 2444 (p. $\frac{210-20}{496-7}$, 2623-4 (p. $\frac{229-30}{508-7}$), part of 2646-7 (p. $\frac{231}{508}$), 2708 (p. $\frac{234}{511}$), part of 2726, 2730, 2741 (p. $\frac{235-6}{512-13}$), part of 2854 ($\frac{247}{519}$), 3034 (p. $\frac{259}{527}$).

turn over the leaves. Altogether, at least, 760 lines are wanting in Harl. 7334: a serious loss.[1] But on the other hand, this Harl. 7334 puts lines 1307-8 of Group D, the Friar's Tale, in their right place, on p. $\frac{372}{434}$ instead of their wrong one as lines 1293-5 of the Wife-Friar Link, on p. $\frac{371}{431}$.

That in some cases the Harl. readings are not so good as those of the Ellesmere, I showd in my article 'Recent[2] Work at Chaucer' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for March 1874; but I admitted that in other instances the Harleian readings were the better. Of the MSS which contain the spurious 'Tale of Gamelyn'—the A-type ones don't—Prof. Skeat found Harl. 7334 much the best. See his 1*s.* 6*d.* edition of *Gamelyn* for the Clarendon Press.

I once hoped to have edited the *Tales* and all Chaucer either with Mr. Bradshaw or alone; but alas, what with the Philological Soc., and occasional work for its Dictionary, Early English Texts and Wyclif, Shakspere and his Quartos and Folios, Browning and Shelley Societies, Sculling-Fours, Kangaroo bicycles, evenings out, and general laziness, I fear that edition must be left for some more learned and energetic person than myself. Let it suffice that the Chaucer Society has cleard the way for the coming man. I am due now at our Rowing-Club Dance.

British Museum,
Friday, Jan. 8, 1886, 7.30 p.m., under the Electric Light.

[1] The Harl. 7334 also has not the (?) original but rejected End-Link to the Clerk's Tale, p. $\frac{477}{275}$ of the Ellesmere MS.

[2] The epithet of Sir G. Grove, the then Editor. I wanted 'late.

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[1] It has not the Friar lines 252 *b*, *c* of the Hengwrt MS.
[2] Eight genuine lines, 4415—4422, are left out here.
[3] Five genuine lines at the end are left out, 1186—1190.

Group		Six-Text pages	Harl. pages
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[1] The ordinary lines G. 1295-6 of this Link which are wrongly shifted in the Six-Texts, &c. (p. 371) from *The Friar's Tale*, of which they form lines G. 1307-8, p. $\frac{373}{232}$, are put in their right place on p. $\frac{371}{231}$, by the Harl. MS 7334.

[2] Eight spurious lines, D. 2004 *b*, *c*: 2012 *b*, *c*; 2037 *b*, *c*; 2048 *b*, *c*, p. $\frac{393-4}{253-4}$ are stuck into Harl. 7334.

[3] The stanzas of this are in their right order.

[4] The end of what there is, is out of the Harl. MS, as 8 leaves of the MS are missing here, p. $\frac{496-514}{354-355}$.

Group		Six-Text pages	Harl. pages
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[1] Four lines, 299-300 and 305-6, are left out in this.

[2] Dr Richard Morris was the first to track this to its source in one of the Buddhist Jataka Tales. He englisht it long ago for me, and mentiond the Eastern source in his article in *The Contemporary Review*, May 1881, p. 728—749.

[3] For B § 1—3 see Man-of-Law's Head-Link, Tale and End-Link, p. $\frac{129}{145}$, above.

[4] The four 'modern instances'—1. Peter (the Cruel) of Spain, 2. Peter of Cyprus, 3. Barnabo Visconti of Milan, and 4. Ugolino, Count of Pisa—are rightly put after Zenobia, l. 3564, p. $\frac{268}{545}$, and not at the end of the Tale as in the Ellesmere and other A MSS, p. 500-3 Elles. But one stanza is missing, B 3213-20, p. $\frac{257}{534}$.

Group		Six-Text pages	Harl. pages
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GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

§ 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

WHan that aprille wiṫ his schowres swoote [*leaf* i]
The droughṫ of Marche haþ perced to þe roote
And bathud euery veyne in swich licour
Of which vertue engendred is þe flour 4
whan ȝephirus eek with his swete breeth
Enspirud hatḫ in euery holte and heeṫ
The tendre croppes and þe ȝonge sonne
hath in the Ram his halfe cours I-ronne 8
And smale fowles maken melodie
That slepen al þe nigḫt wiþ open yhe
So prikeþ hem nature in here corages
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages 12
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes kouthe in sondry londes
And specially from euery schires ende
Of Engelond to Canturbury þey wende 16
The holy blisful martir for to seeke
That hem haþ holpen whan þat þey were seeke
Byfel þat in þat sesoun on a day
In Southwerk at þe Tabbard as I lay 20
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canturbury with ful deuout/ corage
At nigḫt was come in to þat hostelrie
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye 24
Of sondry folk by auenture I-falle
In felaschipe and pilgryms were þei alle
That toward Canturbury wolden ryde

The Chambres and þe stables weren wyde 28
And wel we weren esud atte beste
And schortly whan þe sonne was to reste
So hadde I spoken with hem euerychon
That' I was of' here felawschipe anon 32
And made forward erly to a Ryse
To take oure weye ther as I ȝow deuyse
But natheles whiles I haue tyme and space
Or þat' I ferþere in þis tale pace 36
Me þinkeþ it acordant' to resoun
To telle ȝow alle þe condicioun
Of' eche of' hem so as it semed me [*leaf* 1, *back*]
And which þey weren and of' what degre 40
And eek' in what array þat' þey were Inne
And at' a knigh̄t' than wol I first' bygynne
A Knigh̄t' þer was and þat' a worþy man
That from þe tyme þat he ferst bigan 44
To ryden out' he louede Chyualrye
Trouthe and honour fredom and curtesie
Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre
And þerto hadde he riden noman ferre 48
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse
And eu*er*e honoured for his worþinesse
At' Alisandre he was whan it was wonne
Ful ofte tyme he hadde þe bord bygonne / 52
Abouen alle nacio*u*ns in pruce
In lettowe hadde Reyced and in Ruce
No cristen man so ofte of his degre
In Gernade atte siege hadde he be 56
At' Algesir and riden in Belmarie
At' lieys was he and at' Satalie
At' many a noble ariue hadde he be
whan þey were wonne and in þe greete see 60
At' mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene
And foughten for oure feith at Tramassene
In lystes þries and ay slayn his foo

This ilke worþi knigh̃t hadde ben also 64
Somtyme with þe lord of Palatye
Ageyn anoþer hethene in Turkye
And eu*er*emore he hadde a souereyn prys
And þough̃ he was worþy he was wys 68
And of his port as meke as a mayde
he neuer ȝit no vilonye ne sayde
In al his lyf vnto no maner wigh̃t
he was a verray p*er*fiȝt gentil knigh̃t 72
But for to telle ȝou of his array
his hors was good but he ne was nouȝt gay
Of fustyan he wered a Gepoun
Al by smoterud with his haburgeoun 76
For he was late comen from his viage [*leaf* 2]
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage
With him þer was his sone a ȝong squyer
A louyer and a lusty bacheler 80
With lokkes crulle as þey were layde in presse
Of twenty ȝeer he was of age I gesse
Of his stature he was of euene lengthe
And wondurly delyuer and gret of strengthe 84
And he hadde ben som tyme in Chiuachie
In Flaundres in Artoys and in Picardie
And born him wel as in so litel space
In hope to stonden in his lady grace / 88
Embrowdid was he as it were a mede /
Al ful of fresshe floures white and reede
Syngynge he was or flowtynge al þe day
he was as fresh̃ as is the moneth of may 92
Schort was his goune with sleeues long and wyde
wel cowde he sitte on hors and wel cowde he ryde
he cowde songes wel make and endite
Iustne and eek daunce and wel purtray and write 96
So hote he louede þat by nightertale
he sleep nomore þan doþ a nightyngale
Curteys he was lowly and seruysable

And carf' byforn his fadur at' þe table / 100
A ȝeman had he / and seruantes nomoo
At' þat' tyme for him lust' ryde soo
And he was clad in coote and hood of' grene
A shef' of' pocok' arwes brigh̄t' and kene 104
vnder his belte he bar ful þriftily
wel cowde he dresse his takel ȝomanly
His arwes drowpud nouȝt' wiþ fetheres lowe
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe 108
A not' heed hadde he wiþ a brown visage
Of' woode craft' cowde he wel al þe vsage
vpon his arme he bar a gay bracer
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler 112
And on þat' oþer side a gay daggere
harneysed wel and scharp as poynt' of' spere
A cristofre on his brest' of' siluer schene [*leaf* 2, *back*]
An horn he bar þe bawdrik' was of' grene 116
A forster was he sothely as I gesse
Ther was also a Nonne a prioresse
That' of' hire smylyng' was ful symple and coy
hire grettest' ooth nas but by seynt' loy 120
And sche was clept'/ madame Englentyne
Ful wel sche sang' þe seruise deuyne
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly
And frensch̄ sche spak' ful faire and fetysly 124
Aftur þe scole of' Stratford atte Bowe
For frensch of' Parys was to hire vnknowe
At' mete wel I-taugh̄t' was sche with alle
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Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe
wel cowde sche carie a morsel and wel keepe
That' no drope fil vppon hire brest'
In Curtesie was sett al hire lest' 132
hire ouerlippe wypud sche so clene
That in hire Cuppe was no ferþing sene
Of' grees whan sche dronken hadde hire draugh̄t

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And sikurly sche was of gret disport
And ful plesant/ and amyable of port
And peyned hire to counterfete cheere
Of court and ben estatlich of manere 140
And to ben holden digne of Reuerence
But for to speken of hire conscience
Sche was so charitable and so pitous
Sche wolde weepe if þat sche sawe a Mous 144
Caught in a trappe if it were deed or bledde
Of smale houndes hadde sche þat sche fedde
With rostud fleissh and mylk and wastel breed
But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed 148
Or if men smot it wiþ a ȝerde smerte
And al was conscience and tendre herte
Ful semely hire wymple I-pynched was
Hire nose streight hire eyen grey as glas 152
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It was almost a spanne brood I trowe
For hardily sche was not vndurgrowe 156
Ful fetys was hire cloke as I was waar
Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar
A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene
And þer on heng a broch of gold ful schene 160
On which was first I-writen a crowned A.
And after þat Amor vincit omnia.
Anothur Nonne with hire hadde sche
That was hire Chapelleyn and prestes þre 164
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An out Rydere þat loved venerye
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And whan he rood men might his bridel heere
Gyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere
And eek as lowde as doþ þe chapel belle

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By cause þat' it' was old and somdel streyt'
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That' seiþ þat' hunters been noon holy men
Ne þat a monk' whan he is Cloysterles
Is likned to a fissche þat' is watirles 180
This is to seyn a monk' out' of' his cloystre
But þilke text' hild he not' worþ an oystre /
And I seide his opinio*un* was good
what' schulde he studie and make himseluen wood 184
Vppon a book' in Cloystre alway to powre
Or swynke with his handes and laboure
As Austyn byt' // how schal þe world be serued
lat' austyn haue his swynk' to him reserued 188
Therfore he was a pricasour arigh̄t'
Greyhou*n*des he hadde as swifte as fowel in figh̄t
Of' prikyng' and of' huntyng' for þe hare [*leaf 3, back*]
was al his lust for no cost' wolde he spare 192
I saugh̄ his sleues purfiled atte hond
wiþ grys and that' þe fynest' of a lond
And for to festne his hood vndur his chyn
he hadde of' gold y-wrough̄t' a curious pyn 196
A loue knotte in þe gretter ende þer was
His heed was ballid and schon as eny glas
And eek' his face as he hadde be anoynt'
he was a lord ful fat and in good poynt' 200
his eyen steep and rollyng' in his heed
That' stemed as a forneys of' a leed
His bootes souple his hors in gret' estat'
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat 204
he was not' pale as a for-pyned goost
A fat' swan loued he best' of' eny roost
His palfray was as bro*un* as eny berye

A Frere þer was a wantoun and a merye 208
A lymytour a ful solempne man
In alle the ordres foure is noon þat can
So moche of daliaunce and fair langage
He hadde I-made many a fair mariage 212
Of ȝonge wymmen at his owne cost
vnto his ordre he was a noble post
Ful wel biloued and famulier was he
with Frankeleyns ouer al in his cuntre 216
And eek with worþi wommen of þe toun
For he hadde power of confessioun
As seyde himself more þan a curat
For of his ordre he was licenciat/ 220
Ful sweetly herde he confessioun
And plesaunt was his absolucioun
He was an esy man to ȝeue penance
Ther as he wiste han a good pitance 224
For vnto a poure ordre for to ȝeue
Is signe þat a man is wel I-schreue
For if he ȝaf he dorste make auaunt
He wiste þat a man was repentaunt 228
For many a man so hard is of his herte [leaf 4]
He may not wepe þoughh him sore smerte
Therfore in stede of wepyng and prayeres
Men mooten ȝiuen siluer to þe pore freres 232
His typet was ay farsud ful of knyfes
And pynnes for to ȝiue faire wyfes
And certayn he hadde a mery noote
wel couthe he synge and pleye on a Rote 236
Of ȝeddynges he bar vtturly þe prys
his nekke whit was as þe flour delys
Ther to he strong was as a Champioun
He knew wel þe tauernes in euery toun 240
And euery Ostiller or gay tapstere
Bet þan a laȝer or a beggere
For vnto such a worþi man as he

Acorded not' as by his faculte 244
To haue with sike laȝars aqueyntaunce
It is not' honest it may not' avaunce
For to delen with such poraile
But' al with riche and sellers of' vitaille 248
And ouer al þer eny profyt' schulde arise
Curteys he was. and lowe of' seruyse
Ther was no man no wher so vertuous
He was þe beste begger in al his hous 252
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
For þoughh a widewe hadde but oo schoo
So plesaunt' was his In principio
ȝet' wolde he haue a ferthing' or he wente
his purchace was bettur þan his rente 256
And rage he couþe and pleye as a whelpe
In loue-dayes ther couthe he mochil helpe
For þer was he not like a cloysterer
With a thred-bare cope as a pore scoler 260
But he was like a maister or a pope
Of' double worstede was his semy cope /
That' rounded was as a belle out' of presse
Somwhat' he lipsede for wantounesse / 264
To make his Englisschh swete vpon his tunge
And in his harpyng' whan þat' he hadde sunge
His eyȝen twynkeled in his heed aighht' [*leaf 4, back*]
As don þe sterres in þe frosty nighht' 268
This worthi lymytour was called huberd
A Marchaunt' was þer wiþ a forked berd
In motteleye highh on horse he sat'
vppon his heed a Flaundrisch beuer hat/ 272
His botus clapsud faire and fetously
His resons he spak' ful solempnely
Swownynge alway the encres of' his wynnyng'
He wolde þe see were kepud for eny þing' 276
Bitwixe Middulburghh and Orewelle /

wel couþe he in eschange scheeldes selle /
This worþi man ful wel his witte bisette
Ther wiste no man that he was in dette 280
So estately was he of' gouernaunce
with his bargayns and with his cheuysaunce
For sothe he was a worþi man with alle
Bot soth to say I not' what men him calle / 284

A Clerk' þer was of' Oxenford also
That vnto logik' hadde longe I-go
Al so lene was his hors as is a rake
And he was not' right' fat' I vndertake 288
But' lokede holwe and þerto soburly
Ful thredbare was his ouerest courtepy
For he hadde nouȝt' geten hym ȝit' a benefice
Ne was not worþy to hauen an office 292
For him was leuer haue at' his beddes heed
Twenty bookes cloþed in blak' and reed
Of Aristotil and of his philosophie
Then Robus Riche or fithul or Sawtrie 296
But' al þough̄ he were a philosophre
Ȝet' hadde he but' litul gold in cofre
But al þat' he migh̄t' gete and his frendes sende
On bookes and his lernyng' he it spende 300
And busily gan for þe soules pray
Of' hem þat ȝaf him wherwith to scolay
Of' studie tooke he most' cure and heede
Not' oo word spak' he more þan was neede 304
Al þat' he spak' it' was of' heye prudence [leaf 5]
And schort' and quyk' and ful of' gret' sentence
Sownynge in moral manere was his speche /
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche 308

A Sergeant' of' lawe war and wys
That' often hadde ben atte paruys
Ther was also ful riche of' excellence
Discret/ he was and of' gret Reuerence 312
He semed such his wordes were so wise

Iustice he was fuloften in assise
By patent' and by pleyn comissioun
For his science and for his heih renoun 316
Of' fees and Robes had he many oon
So gret' a purchasour was þer no wher noon
Al was fee symple to him in effecte
his purchasyng' might' nought' ben to hī m suspecte 320
No wher so besy a man as he þer nas /
And ȝit' he semed besier þan he was
In termes hadde caas and domes alle
That fro þe tyme þat kyng' were falle 324
Ther to he couþe endite and make a þing'
Ther couþe no man pynche at his writyng'
And euery statute couthe he pleyn by roote
He rood but' hoomly in a medled coote 328
Gird with a seynt of silk' wiþ barres smale
Of his array telle I no lenger tale
A Frankeleyn *þer* was in his companye /
whit' was his berde as þe dayesye 332
Of' his complexioun he was sangwyn
wel loued he in þe morn a sop of' wyn
To lyue in delite was al his wone
For he was Epicurius owne sone 336
That' heeld opynyoun þat pleyn delyt
was verraily felicite perfyt'
An houshaldere and þat' a gret was he
Seynt' Iulian he was in his countre 340
his breed his ale was alway after oon
A bettre envyned man was no wher noon.
wiþoute bake mete was neuer his hous [*leaf 5, back*]
Of' fleissch and fissch and þat' so plentyuous 344
Hit' snewed in his hous of mete and drynk'
Of' alle deyntees þat' men cowde þynk'
Aftur þe sondry sesouns of' þe ȝeer
He chaunged hem at mete and at soper 348
Ful many a fat partrich had he in mewe

And many a brem and many a luce in stewe
Woo was his Cook' but if' his sauce were
Poynant' and scharp and redy al his gere 352
His table dormant' in his halle alway·
Stood redy couered al þe longe day
At' sessions þer was he lord and sire
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of' þe schire 356
An Anlas and a gipser al of' silk'
heng' at his gerdul whit' as morne mylk'
A schirreue hadde he ben and a counter
was nowher such a worthi vauaser 360
AN haburdassher and a Carpenter
A webbe a deyer and a Tapicer
weren with vss eeke clothed in oo lyuere
Of' a solempne and gret' fraternite 364
Ful freissh and newe his gere piked was
Here knyfes were I-chapud nat' with bras
But' al with siluer wrought' ful clene and wel
here gurdles and here pouches euery del 368
wel semed eche of' hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a ȝeldehalle on þe deys
Euery man for þe wisdom þat he can
was schaply for to ben an aldurman · 372
For Catel hadde þey Inough and rente /
And eek' here wyfes wolde it' wel assente /
And elles certeyn hadde þei ben to blame
It is right' fair for to be clept' Ma Dame 376
And for to go to vigilies al byfore
And han a mantel rially I-bore
A Cook' þei hadde with hem for þe nones
To boyle chiknes and þe mary bones 380
And poudre marchaunt / tart' and galyngale [leaf 6]
wel cowde he knowe a drauȝt' of' londoun ale
He cowde roste sethe boille and frie
Make mortreux and wel bake a pye 384
But' gret' harm was it as it' semede me

That' on his schyne a mormal hadde he
For blankmanger he made with þe beste
A Schipman was þer wonyng fer by weste 388
For ought' I woot' he was of Dertemouthe
He rood vpon a rouncy as he couþe
In a gowne of' faldyng' to þe kne
A dagger hangyng' on a laas hadde he 392
Aboute his nekke vnder his arm a doun
The hoote somer had maad his hew al broun
And certeinly he was a good felawe
Ful many a draught of' wyn had he drawe 396
From Burdeuxward, whil þat þe chapman sleep
Of nyce conscience took' he no keep
If' þat' he foughte and hadde þe heiȝer hand
By water he sente hem hoom to euery land 400
But' of' his craft' to rikne wel þe tydes
his stremes and his dangers him bisides
His herbergh and his mone his lodemenage
Ther was non such from hulle to Cartage 404
Hardy he was and wys to vndertake
with many a tempest' hath his berd ben schake
He knew wel alle þe hauenes as þei were
From Scotlond to the cape of' fynestere 408
And euery Cryk' in Bretayne and in Spayne
His Barge y-clepud was the Magdelayne
Ther was also a Doctour of' phisik'
In al þis world ne was þer non him lyk' 412
To speke of' phisik' and of' Surgerye
For he was groundud in astronomye
he kepte his pacient' wondurly wel
In houres by his magik' naturel 416
wel cowde he fortune the ascendent
Of' his ymages for his pacient'
He knew þe cause of' euery maladye [*leaf 6, back*]
were it' of' cold or hete or moyst' or drye 420
And where þei engendrid and of' what' humour

he was a *ver*rey p*ar*fight' practisour
The cause I-knowe and of his harm þe roote
Anon he ȝaf þe syke man his boote 424
Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries
To sende him dragges and his letuaries
For eche of' hem made oþur to wynne
Here frendschipe nas not newe to begynne 428
wel knew he þe olde Esculapius
And deiscorides. and eeke Rusus
Old ypocras. haly and Galien
Serapyon. Razis and Auycen 432
Auerrois damascen and Constantyn
Bernad and Gatisdeñ and Gilbertyn
Of his diete mesurable was he
For it was of' no superfluite 436
But' of gret' norisching' and digestible
His studie was but' litel on þe bible
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al
Lyned with taffata and with Sendal 440
And ȝit he was but esy in dispence
He kepte þat' he wan in pestilence
For gold in phisik' is a cordial
Ther fore he louede gold in special 444
A Good wif' was þer of' byside bathe
But sche was somdel deef and þat' was skaþe
Of' cloth makyng' sche hadde such an haunt
Sche passed hem of' ypris and of' Gaunt 448
In al þe parisshe wyf' ne was ther noon
That' to þe offryng' byforn hire schulde goon
And if' þer dide certeyn so wroth was sche
That' sche was þanne out' of' alle charite 452
hire keuerchefs weren ful fyne of' grounde
I durste swere þey weyȝede ten pounde
That' on a sonday were vpon hire heed
hire hosen were of fyn scarlett reed 456
Ful streyte y-teyed and schoos ful moyste and newe [*leaf* 7]

Bold was hir face and fair and reed of' heewe
Sche was a worþy wo*m*man al hire lyfe
Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe 460
withouten oþur companye in ȝouthe
But' therof' needeth nouȝt' to speke as nouthe
And þries hadde sche ben at' Ierusalem
Sche hadde passud many a st*ra*unge streem 464
At Rome sche hadde ben and at' Boloyne
In Galice at' seynt' Iame and at' Coloyne
Sche cowde moche of' wandryng' by þe weye
Gattothud was sche soþly for to seye 468
vppon an amblere esely sche sat
wymplid ful wel and on hire heed an hat
As brood as is a bocler or a Targe
A foot' mantel aboute hire hupes large 472
And on hire feet a paire of' spores scharpe
In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe
Of' Remedyes of' loue sche knew p*ar* chaunce
For of' þat' art' sche knew þe olde daunce 476
A Good man was ther of Religio*u*n
And was a pore persou*n* of' a toun
But riche he was of' holy þought and werk'
He was also a lerned man a Clerk' 480
That cristes gospel gladly wolde preche
His p*ar*ischens deuoutly wold he teche
Benigne he was and wondur diligent
And in aduersite ful pacient 484
And such he was I-proued ofte sithes
Ful loth were him to curse for his tythes
But' raþer wolde he ȝeuen out' of' dowte
vnto his pore parisschens aboute 488
Of' his offrynge and eek' of' his substa*u*nce
he cowde in litel þing' han suffisance
wyd was his parisch and houses fer asondur
But' he ne lafte not' for reyn ne þondur 492
In siknesse ne in meschief' to visite

The ferrest' in his parissche moche and lite
Vppon his feet and in his hond a staf' [*leaf* 7, *back*]
This noble ensample vnto his scheep he ȝaf' 496
That' ferst' he wroughte and after þat he taughte
Out' of' þe gospel he þo wordes caughte /
And þis figure he addid ȝit' *þer*to
That' if' gold ruste what' schulde yren doo? 500
For if' a prest be foul on whom we truste
No wondur is a lewid man to ruste;
And schame it is if' a prest' take kepe
A schiten schepperd and a clene schepe 504
wel oughte a prest ensample for to ȝiue
By his clennesse how þat' his scheep schulde lyue
he sette not' his benefice to huyre
And lefte his scheep encombred in þe myre 508
And ran to londo*un* vnto seynte poules
To seeken him a chaunterie for soules
Or with a brethurhede be wiþ-holde
But' dwelte at' hoom and kepte wel his folde / 512
So þat' þe wolf' ne made it not myscarye
He was a schepp*ar*de and no mercenarie
And þough he holy were and vertuous
he was to senful man nought' dispitous 516
Ne of' his speche daungerous ne digne
But' in his teching' discret' and benigne
To drawe folk' to heuen by clennesse
By good ensample was his busynesse 520
But' it were eny p*ar*sone obstinat'
what' so he were of' high̃ or lowe estat'
him wolde he snybbe scharply for þe nones
A bettre preest I trowe ther nowher non is 524
he waytud after no pompe ne reuerence
Ne maked him a spiced conscience /
But' cristes lore and his apostles twelue
he taught'. and ferst' he folwed it' himselue 528
With hem þer was a plough̃ man his broþur

That' hadde I-lad of' dong' ful many a foþur
A trewe swynker and a good was hee
Lyuynge in pees and p*ar*fiȝt' charitee 532
God loued he best' al his trewe herte [*leaf* 6]
At' alle tymes þough him gamed or smerte
And þanne his neighebour right' as himselue
He wolde threisshe and þerto dyke and delue 536
For cristes sake with euery pore wiht'
wiþouten huyre if it' laye in his miht'
His tythes payede he ful faire and wel
Bathe of' his owne swynk' and his catel 540
In a tabbard Rood vpon a mere
Ther was also a Reeue and a mellere
A sompnour and a p*ar*doner also
A mauncipie and my self' þer was no mo 544
THe mellere was a stout' carl for þe nones
Full big' he was of' braun and eek' of boones /
That' preuede wel for ouer al þer he cam
At wrastlynge he wolde bere awey þe Ram 548
He was schort' schuldred broode a þikke knarre
Ther was no dore þat' he nolde heue of' harre
Or breke it with a rennyng' with his heed
his berd as ony sowe or fox was reed 552
And þerto brood as þough it' were a spade
vpon þe cop riht' of' his nose he hade
A werte and þer on stood a tuft' of heres
Reede as þe berstles of' a souwes eeres 556
his nose-þurles blake were and wyde
A swerd and a bocler baar he by his side
His mouth as wyde was as a gret' forneys
he was a Iangler and a golyardeys 560
And þat' was most' of' synne and harlotries
wel cowde he stele corn and tollen þries
And ȝet' he hadde a þombe of' golde parde
A whiȝt' cote and blewe hood wered he 564
A bagge pipe. cowde he blowe and sowne

And þerwiþ al he brought vs out of towne
A Gentil maunciple was ther of a temple
Of which achatours mighten take exemple 568
For to be wys in beyyng of vitaille
For whe þur þat he payde or took by taille
Algate he wayted so in his acate [*leaf* 8, *back*]
That he was ay biforn and in good state 572
Now is not þat of god a ful fair grace
That such a lewed mannes wit schal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lernede men
Of maystres hadde moo þan þries ten 576
That were of lawe expert and curious
Of which þer were a doseyn in an hous
worthi to be stiwardȝ of Rente and lond
Of any lord þat is in Engelond 580
To make him lyue by his propre good
In honour detteles but if he were wood
Of lyue as scarsly as he can desire
And able for to helpen al a schire 584
In any caas þat mighte falle or happe
And ȝit this maunciple sette here aller cappe
The Reeue was a sklendre colerik man
his berd was schaue as neigh as euer he can 588
his heer was by his Eres neigh I-schorn
his top was dockud lyk a preest biforn
Ful longe wern his leggus and ful lene
Al like a staff ther was no calf y-sene 592
wel cowde he kepe a gerner and a bynne
Ther was non auditour cowde on him wynne
wel wiste he by the drought and by þe Reyn
The ȝeeldyng of his seed and of his greyn 596
his lordes scheep his neet his dayerie
his swyn his hors his stoor and his pultrie
was holly in this Reeues gouernynge
And by his couenaunt ȝaf þe Rekenynge 600
Syn þat his lord was .xx.ti ȝeer of age

Ther couthe noman bringe him in arrerage
Ther nas baillif' ne herde ne oþer hyne
That' þey ne knewe his sleight' and his couyne 604
They were adrad of him as of' þe deth
his wonyng' was ful fair vpon an heth
wiþ grene trees I-schadewed was his place
he cowde bettre þan his lord purchace 608
Ful riche he was I-stored priuely [*leaf* 9]
His lord wel couthe he plese subtilly
To ȝeue him and lene him of' his owne good
And haue a þank' a cote and eek' an hood 612
In ȝouþe he lerned hadde a good mester
he was a wel good wright' a carpenter
This Reeue sat' vpon a wel good stot'
That' was a pomely gray and bighte Scot' 616
A long' surcote of' blew vppon he hadde
And by his side he bar a Rusty bladde
Of Northfolk' was þis Reeue of' which I telle
Byside a toun men callen Baldeswelle 620
Tukkud he was as is a frere aboute
And euer he rood the hynderest' of' þe route
A Sompnour was þer with vs in þat' place
That' hadde a fyr-reed Cherubyns face 624
For sawceflem he was with eyȝen narwe
As hoot' he was and leccherous as a sparwe
Wiþ skalled browes blak and piled berd
Of' his visage children weren aferd 628
Ther nas quyk' siluer litarge ne bremstoñ
Boras Ceruce ne oille of' Tartre noōn
Ne oynement' þat' wolde clense and byte
That' him might' helpen of his whelkes white 632
Ne of' þe knobbes sittyng' on his cheekes
wel loued he garleek' oynouns and ek' leekes
And for to drinke strong' wyn reed as blood
Thanne wolde he speke and crye as he were wood 636
And whan that' he wel dronken hadde þe wyn

Than wolde he speke no word but' latyn
A fewe termes hadde he tuo or þre
That he hadde lerned out' of' som decree 640
No wondur is he herde it al þe day
And eek' ȝe knowe wel how þat' a Iay
Can clepe watte as wel as can þe pope
But' who-so wolde in oþur þing' him grope 644
Thanne hadde he spent' al his philosophie
Ay questio quid Iuris wolde he crye
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde [*leaf* 9, *back*]
A bettre felaw schulde men nowher fynde 648
He wolde suffre for a quart' of wyn
A good felawe han his concubyn
A .xij. moneth. and excuse him atte fulle
And pryuely a Fynch eek cowde he pulle 652
And if' he fond owher a good felawe
he wolde teche him for to haue non awe
In such a caas of' þe archedeknes curs
But' if' a mannes soule were in his purs 656
For in his purs he scholde punyssched be
Purs is the Ercedeknes helie q*uo*d he
But' wel I woot he lyeth right' in dede
Of' cursyng' oweth ech gulty man to drede 660
For curs wol slee. right' as assoillyng' saueth
And also ware him of a Significauit
In daunger he hadde at' his owne assise
The ȝonge gurles of' the Diocise 664
And knew here co*u*nseil and was al here red
A garland had he set' vpon his heed
As gret as it were for an ale stake
A bokeler had he maad him of a cake 668
With him þer rood a gentil Pardoner
Of' Rounciual his frend and his comper
That' streyt' was comen from þe court' of' Rome
Ful lowde he sang com hider loue tome 672
The sompnour bar to him a stif' burdo*u*n

was neuere trompe of half' so gret' a soun'
This p*ar*doner hadde heer as ȝelwe as wex
But smothe it heng'. as doth a strike of' Flex 676
By vnces hynge his lokkes þat he hadde
And þ*er*with he his schuldres ou*er*spradde
Ful thenne it lay by culpons on and oon
And hood for Iolitee ne wered he noon 680
For it was trussud vp in his walet
Him þought' he rood al of þe newe get'
Discheuele sauf' his cappe he rood al bare
Suche glaryng' eyȝen hadde he as an hare 684
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe [*leaf* 10]
His walet' lay byforn him in his lappe
Bret' ful of' p*ar*dou*n* come from Rome al hoot
A voys he hadde as smal as eny goot 688
No berd ne hadde he ne neuer scholde haue
As smothe it was as it ware late I-schaue /
I trowe he were a geldyng' or a mare
But' of' his craft' fro Berwyk' vnto ware 692
Ne was þer such another pardoner
For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer
which þat he saide was oure lady veyl
he seide he hadde a gobet' of' þe seyl 696
That seynt' Petur hadde whan he wente
Vppon þe see til ihū crist' him hente
he hadde a cros of' latoun ful of' stones
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones 700
But' with þise reliqes whanne þat he fand
A pore p*ar*soun dwellyng' vppon land
vpon a day he gat him more moneye
Than þat þe p*ar*soun gat' in monthes tweye 704
And þus with feyned flaterie and Iapes
he made þe p*ar*soun and þe poeple his apes
But' trewely to tellen atte laste
He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste 708
wel cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye

But altherbest he sang an offertorie
For wel[1] he whan þat song was songe [[1] *later* wyst *at side*]
he moste preche and wel affyle his tunge 712
To wynne siluer as he right wel cowde
Therefore he sang ful meriely and lowde

NOw haue I told ȝou schortly in a clause
Thestat þarray þe nombre and eek þe cause 716
why þat assembled was þis companye
In Southwerk at þis gentil Ostelrie
That highte þe Tabbard faste by þe belle
But now is tyme to ȝow for to telle 720
how þat we bare vs in þat ilke nigħt
whan we were in that Ostelrie aligħt
And aftur wol I telle of oure viage [*leaf* 10, *back*]
And al þe remenaunt of oure pilgrimage 724

But ferst I pray ȝou of ȝour curtesie
That ȝe ne rette it nat my vilanye
Thougħ þat I speke al pleyn in þis matere
And telle ȝou here wordes and here cheere 728
Ne though I speke here wordes *pro*purly
For þis ȝe knowen also wel as I
who-so schal telle a tale aftur a man
He moste reherce as neigħ as euer he can 732
Euery word if it be in his charge
Al speke he neuer so Rudely ne large
Or elles he moot telle his tale vntrewe
Or feyne þing or fynde his wordes newe 736
He may not spare þougħ he were his broþur
He moste as wel sey oo word as anoþur
Crist spak himself ful broode in holy writ
And wel ȝe woot no vilanye is it 740
Eke Plato seith who-so þat can him rede
The wordes mot be cosyn to þe dede
Also I pray ȝou to forȝeue it me
Al haue I folk nat set in here degre 744
Here in þis tale as þat þei schulde stonde

My witt' is thynne. ȝe may wel vndurstonde
GReet' cheere made oure ost' vs euerichon
And to þe souper sette he vs anon 748
He serued vs with vitaille atte beste
Strong' was þe wyn and wel to drynke vs leste
A semely man oure Ooste was wiþ alle
For to han been a Marchal in an halle 752
A large man was he with eyȝen stepe
A fairere burgeys is þer noon in chepe
Bold of' his speche and wys and wel I-taught'
And of' manhede lakkede he right naught 756
Eke þerto he was right' a mery man
And after soper playen he bygan
And spak' of' myrthe. among' oþur þinges
whan þat we hadde maad our rekenynges 760
And sayde þus. Lo lordynges trewely [leaf 11]
ȝe ben to me right' welcome hertily
For by my trouthe if' þat' I schal not' lye
I ne saugh þis ȝeer so mery a companye 764
At oones in this herbergh as is now
Fayn wold I do ȝow merthe wiste I how
And of' a merthe I am right' now bythought'
To doon ȝou eese and it' schal coste nought' 768
ȝe goon to Caunturbury god ȝou speede
The blisful martir quyte ȝou ȝoure meede
And wel I woot/ as ȝe gon by þe weye
ȝe schapen ȝow to talken and to pleye 772
For trewely comfort' ne merthe is noon
To Ryde by þe weye domb as a stoon
And þerfore wol I make ȝou disport' /
As I seyde erst' and do ȝou som confort' 776
And if' ȝow liketh alle by oon assent
Now for to standen at' my Iuggement
And for to werken as I schal ȝou seye
To morwe whan ȝe riden by þe weye 780
Now by my fadres soule þat is deed

But ȝe be merye smyteþ of' myn heed
hold vp ȝoure hond with-oute more speche
Oure counseil was not longe for to seche 784
vs þoughte it nas nat' worþ to make it wys
And graunted him wiþoute more avys
And bad him seie his verdite as him leste
LOrdynges quoþ he now herkeneþ for þe beste 788
But taketh not' I pray ȝou in disdayn
This is þe poynt to speken schort' and playn
That' ech of ȝow to schorte with ȝoure weie /
In þis viage schal telle tales tweye 792
To Caunturburiward I mene it so
And homward he schal tellen oþur tuo
Of' auentures þat' þer han bifalle
And which of' ȝow þat' bereþ him best' of' alle 796
That is to seye þat telleþ in þis caas
Tales of' best' sentence and of' solas
Schal han a soper at' ȝour alþer cost [*leaf* 11, *back*]
Here in þis place sittynge by þis post' 800
whan þat we comen ageyn from Canturbery
And for to make ȝou þe more mery
I wol my seluen gladly with ȝou ryde
Right' at' myn owen cost' and be ȝoure gyde 804
And who-so wole my Iuggement' withseie
Schal paye for al we spenden by þe weye
And if' ȝe vouche sauf' þat it be so
Telle me anoon wiþouten wordes moo 808
And I wole erely schappe me þerfore
This þing' was graunted and oure othus swore
with ful glad herte and prayden him also
That' he would vouche sauf' for to doon so 812
And þat' he wolde ben oure gouernour
And of' our tales Iugge and reportour
And sette a souper at a certeyn prys
And we wolde rewled be at his deuys 816
In heygh and lowe. and þus by oon assent

We been acorded to his Iuggement
And þer-vpon þe wyn was fet' anoon
we dronken and to reste wente echoon. 820
wiþouten eny lengere taryinge
A morwe whan þat' þe day bigan to sprynge
vp roos oure Ost' and was oure althur cok'
And gaderud vs to-gidur alle in a flok' 824
And forth we riden a litel more þan paas
vnto þe waterynge of' seint Thomas
And þere oure Ost' bigan his hors areste
And seyde lordus herkeneþ if' ȝow leste 828
ȝe woot' ȝoure forward and I it ȝou recorde
If' euesong' and morwesong' acorde
Let se now who schal telle ferst a tale
As euore I moote drinke wyn or ale 832
who-so be rebel to my Iuggement
Schal paye for al þat' by the weye is spent
Now draweth Cut/ er þat' we forther twynne
which þat' hath þe schortest schal bygynne 836
Sire knight' quoþ he maister and my lord [leaf 12]
Now draweth Cut. for þat is myn acord
Cometh ner quod he my lady prioresse
And ȝe sir Clerk lat' be ȝour schamfastnesse 840
Ne studieth nat ley hand to euery man
Anon to drawen euery wight' bigan
And schortly for to tellen as it' was
were it by auenture or sort' or cas 844
The soth is þis the Cut fil to the knight'
Of' which ful glad and bliþe was euery wight
And telle he moste his tale as was resoun
By forward and by composicioun 848
As ȝe han herd what needeþ wordes moo
And whan þis goode man seigh þat it was so
As he that' wys was and obedient'
To kepe his forward by his fre assent' 852
He seyde syn I schal bygynne the game

what' welcome be þou cut'. a goddus name
Now lat vs ryde and herkneþ what I seye
And with þat' word we riden forþ oure weye 856
And he bigan with right' a merie chere:
His tale. and seide right in þis manere.

[*break of one line in the MS.*]

WHilom as olde stories tellen vs [on leaf 12]
Ther was a Duk' þat highte Theseus 860
Of' Athenes he was. lord and gouernour
And in his tyme swich a conquerour
That' gretter was ther non vnder þe sonne
Ful many a Riche Contre hadde he wonne 864
That' with his wisdam and his chiualrie
He conquered al the regne of' Femynye
That' whilom was I-cleped Cithea
And weddede the queen Ipolita 868
And brought' hire hoom with him in his Contre
with moche glorie and gret' solempnite
And eek' hire ȝonge suster Emelye
And þus with victorie and with melodye 872
Lete I þis noble duk' to Athenes ryde /
And al his Ost' in armes him biside [leaf 12, back]
At' certes if it nere to long' to heere
I wolde han told ȝow fully þe manere 876
How wonnen was the regne of' Femenye
By Theseus and by his Chiualrye
And of' þe grete bataille for þe nones
By-twix athenes. and amazones 880
And how asegid was ypolita
The faire hardy Quyen of Cithea
And of' þe feste that' was at' hire weddynge
And of' þe tempest' at hire hoom comynge 884
But al þat þing' I most as now forbere
I haue god wot' a large feeld to Ere
And wayke ben þe Oxen in my plough
The remenaunt of' the tale is long' I-nough 888
I wol not lette eck'. non of' al þis rowte

lat' euery felawe telle his tale aboute
And lat' see now who schal þe soper wynne 891
And ther I lafte I wolde agayn begynne [break of one line in the MS.]
This Duk' of' whom I make mencioun
whan he was comen almost' vnto þe toun
In al his wele and in his moste pryde
he was war as he cast' his eyȝe aside 896
wher þat' ther kneled in þe hye weye
A companye of' ladies tweye and tweye
Ech after other clad in cloþes blake
But' such a cry and such a woo þey make 900
That in þis world nys creature lyuynge
Ther herde such anoþer weymentynge
And of' þat' cry ne wolde þey neuer stenten
Til þey þe Reynes of' his bridel henten 904
what' folk' be ȝe þat' at' myn hom comynge
P*ar*tourben so my feste with cryenge
Q*uo*d Theseus. haue ȝe so gret' enuye
Of' myn honour þat' þus compleyne and crie 908
Or who hath ȝow mysboden or offendid
And telleþ me if' it' may ben amendid.
And why þat ȝe ben clad þus al in blak' [leaf 13]
The oldest' lady of hem alle spak' 912
whan sche had swowned with a dedly chere
That it was routhe for to seen or heere
And seyde lord to whom fortune haþ ȝeuen
victorie and as a conquerour to luyen 916
Nought' greueth vs ȝoure glorie and honour
But we beseken mercy and socour
Haue mercy on oure woo and oure distresse
Som drope of' pitee thurgh ȝoure gentilnesse 920
Vppon vs wrecchede wo*m*men lat' þou falle
For certus lord. ther nys noon of' vs alle
That' sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene
Now be we Caytifs as it is wel seene 924
Thanked be fortune. and hire false wheel

That[1] noon estat[1] assureth to ben weel
And certus lord to abiden ȝoure presence
[1]Ther in þe temple of[1] þe goddesse Clemence 928
we han ben waytynge al þis fourtenight [[1] *a later* 'here' *in margin*]
Now helpe vs lord syn it is in þy might
I wrecche which þat[1] wepe and waylle þus
was whilom wyf[1] to kyng[1] Capaneus 932
That starf[1] at[1] Thebes. cursed be þat[1] day
And alle we þat[1] ben in þis array
And maken alle þis lamentacio*un*
we leften alle oure housbondes at þe toun 936
whil þat[1] þe sege. þer aboute lay
And ȝet þe olde Creon welaway
That[1] lord is now of[1] thebes þe citee
Fulfilde of[1] Ire and of[1] Iniquite 940
He for despyt[1] and for his Tyrannye
To do þe deede bodyes vilonye
Of[1] alle oure lordes which þat ben I-slawe
Haþ alle þe bodies on an heep y-drawe 944
And wol not[1] suffren hem by noon assent[1]
Nother to ben y-buried nor I-brent[1]
But[1] makeþ houndes ete hem in despite
And with þat[1] word withoute more respite 948
They fillen gruf[1] and criden pitously [*leaf* 13, *back*]
haue on vs wrecched wo*m*men som mercy
And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte
This gentil duke doun from his courser sterte/ 952
with herte pitous whan he herde hem speke
him þoughte þat his herte wolde breke
whan he seyh hem so pitous and so maat[1]
That whilom weren of so gret estat[1] 956
And in his armes he hem alle vp hente
And hem conforteþ in ful good entente
And swor his oth as he was trewe knight[1]
he wolde do so ferforþly his might 960
vpon þe tyra*u*nt Creon hem to wreke

That' al þe poeple of' grece scholde speke
how Creon was of' Theseus y-serued
As he þat haþ his deth right wel deserued 964
And right' anoon wiþoute eny abood
his baner he desplayeþ and forþ rood
To Thebes-ward. and al his oost' bysyde
No ner athenes wolde he go ne ryde 968
Ne take his eese fully half' a day
But' onward on his way þat nyght he lay
And sente anoon ypolita þe queene
And Emelye hir ȝonge suster schene 972
vnto the toun of athenes to dwelle
And forth he ryt þer is no more to telle
The reede statue of' mars with spere and targe
So schyneþ in his white baner large 976
That' alle þe feeldes gliteren vp and doun
And by his baner was born his pynoun
Of' gold ful riche in which þer was I-bete
The Minatour which þat he slough̄ in Crete 980
Thus ryt' þis Duk' þus ryt' þis Conquerour
And in his oost' of' Cheualrie þe flour
Til þat' he cam to Thebes and alighte
Faire in a feeld wher as he þoughte to fighte / 984
But' schortly for to speken of þis þing'
with Creon which þat' was of Thebes kyng'
He faught' and slough̄ him manly as a knight / [leaf 14]
In pleyn bataille and putte his folk' to flight/ 988
And by assaut' he wan þe Cite aftur
And rente doun boþe wal and sparre and raftur
And to þe ladies he restored agayn
The bones of' here housbondes þat' were slayn 992
To do exequies as was þo þe gyse
But it were al to long' for to deuyse
The grete clamour and þe waymentynge
which þat þe ladies made at' þe brennynge 996
Of' þe bodyes and þe grete honour

That' Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to þe ladyes whan þey from him wente
But' schortly for to telle is myn entente 1000
whan þat' þis worthy Duk' þis Theseus
hath Creon slayn and Thebes wonne þus
Stille in þe feelde he took' al night' his reste
And dide with al þe contre as him leste 1004
TO Ransake in þe cas of' bodyes dede
hem for to streepe of herneys and of wede /
The pilours diden businesse and cure
After þe bataile and discomfiture 1008
And so byfil þat in þe cas þei founde
Thurgh girt' with many a greuous blody wounde
Two ȝonge knighte liggyng' by and by
Boþe in oon armes clad ful richely 1012
Of' whiche two Arcite hight' þat' oon
And þat' oþur knight' hight' Palamon
Nat' fully quyk' ne fully deed þey were
But' by here coote armure and by here gere 1016
Heraudes knewe hem wel in special
As þey þat weren of' the blood real
Of Thebes and of' Sistren tuo I-born
Out' of' þe chaas þe pilours han hem torn 1020
And han hem caried softe vnto þe tente /
Of' Theseus and ful sone he hem sente
Tathenes for to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly he wolde no Raunceoun 1024
And þis Duk' whan he hadde þus I-doon [leaf 14, back]
he took' his host' and hom he ryt' anoon
with laurer crowned as a conquerour
And þere he lyueþ in Ioye and in honour 1028
Terme of' his lyf' what' wolle ȝe wordes moo
And in a tour in angwische and in woo ·
This Palamon and his felawe arcite
For euermo þer may no gold hem quyte 1032
This passeþ ȝeer by ȝeer and day by day

Til it' fel oones in a morwe of' may
That Emelie þat' fairer was to seene
Than is þe lilie on hire stalkes grene 1036
And fresscher þan the may with floures newe
For with þe rose colour strof' hire hewe
I not' which was þe fyner of' hem two
Er it' was day as sche was wont' to do 1040
Sche was arisen and al redy dighť
For may wole haue no sloggardye anyghť
The sesoun prikeþ euery gentil herte
And makeþ him · out of' his sleepe sterte 1044
And seith arys and do þin obs*er*uance
This maked Emelye han remembrance
To do honour to May and for to ryse
I-cloþed was sche fresshe for to deuyse 1048
hire ȝolwe heer was browdid in a tresse
Byhynde hire bak' aȝerde long' I gesse
And in the gardyn at þe sonne vpriste
Sche walkeþ vp and doun wher as hire liste 1052
Sche gadereþ floures party whyte and reede
To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede
And as an aungel heuenly sche song'
The grete tour þat was so þikke and strong' 1056
which of' þe castel was the cheef' dongeoun
Ther as þis knightes weren in prisoun
Of' which I tolde ȝow and telle schal
was euene Ioynyng' to þe gardeyn wal 1060
Ther as þis Emely hadde hire pleyynge
Brighť was þe sonne and cleer þat' morwenynge
And Palamon þis woful prisoner [*leaf* 15]
As was his wone by leue of' his gayler 1064
was risen and romed in a Chambre on heighe
In which he al þe noble cite seighe
And eek' þe gardeyn ful of' braunches grene
Ther as þe fresshe Emelye þe scheene 1068
was in hire walk/ and romed vp and doun

This sorweful prisoner þis Palamon
Gooth in þe chambre romyng' to and fro
And to himself' compleynyng' of' his woo 1072
That' he was born / ful ofte he seyd alas
And so byfel by auenture or cas
That' þurgh a wyndow þikke and many a barre
Of Iren greet' and squar as eny sparre 1076
he cast' his eyen vpon Emelya
And þer with al he bleynte and cryed .A.
As þat' he stongen were vnto þe herte
And with þat' crye arcite anon vp sterte 1080
And seyde cosyn myn what' eyleþ þe
That' art' so pale and deedly for to see /
why crydestow who haþ þe doon offence
For goddes loue tak' al in pacience 1084
Oure prisoun for it' may non oþir be
Fortune haþ ȝeuen vs þis aduersite
Som wikke aspect / or disposicioun
Of' Saturne by sum constellacioun 1088
Hath ȝeuen vs þis alþough we hadde it sworn
So stood þe heuen whan þat we were born
we moste endure it þis is þe schort' and pleyn
This Palamon answered and seyde ageyn 1092
Cosyn for sothe of' þis opynyoun
Thou hast' a veyn ymaginacioun
This prisoun caused me not' for to crye
But' I was hurt' right now þurgh̃ myn yhe 1096
Into myn herte þat' wol my bane be
The fairnesse of' þe lady þat' I see
ȝonde in þe gardyn rome to and fro
Is cause of' my cryyng' and my wo 1100
I not' wheþur sche be womman or goddesse / [leaf 15, back]
But' Venus is it/ sothly as I gesse
And þer with al on knees a doun he fil
And seyde venus if' it' be ȝoure wil 1104
ȝow in þis gardyn þus to transfigure

Biforn me sorwful wrecched creature
Out' of' þis prisoun help þat we may scape
And if' so be oure destyne be schape 1108
By eterne word to deyen in prisoun
Of' oure lynage haueth sum compassioun
That is so lowe y-brought by Tyrannye
And with þat' word Arcite gan espye 1112
wher as this lady romed to and fro
And with þat' sight/ hire beaute hurt him so
That' if' þat' Palamon was wounded sore
Arcite is hurt' as moche as he or more 1116
And with a sigh. he seyde pitously
The freissche beaute sleeth me sodeynly
Of' hir that rometh ȝonder in þe place
And but' I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120
That' I may see hir atte leste weye
I nam but' deed / ther nys no more to seye
This Palamon whan he tho wordes herde
Dispitously he loked and answerde 1124
whether seistow in ernest' or in pley
Nay quoþ Arcite in ernest' in good fey
God helpe me so me lust' ful euele pleye
This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye 1128
Hit' nere quod he to the no gret honour
For to be fals ne for to be traytour
To me that' am thy cosyn and thy broþer
I-swore ful deepe and ech of' vs to oþer 1132
That' neuer for to deyen in þe payne
Til þat' deeth departe schal vs twayne
Neyþer of vs in lande to hynder other
Ne in non other cas / my leeue broþer 1136
But' þou schuldest trewly forþer me
In euery caas and I schal forþer þe /
This was þyn othe / and myn eek' certayn [leaf 16]
I wot' right' wel þou darst/ it' nat wiþsayn 1140
Thus art' þou of' my counseil out' of' doute

And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euere schal vnto myn herte sterue 1144
Now certes fals arcite þou schal not so
I loued hir first / and tolde the my woo
As to my counseil / and to broþer sworn
To forthere me as I haue told biforn 1148
For which thou art I-bounden as a knight
To helpe me/ if it lay in þi might/
Or elles art þou fals I dar wel sayn
This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn 1152
Thou schalt quoþ he be rather fals þan I
But þou art fals / I telle þe vttirly
For paramour I loued hir first þen þow
what wolt þou sayn thou wost it not ȝit now 1156
wheþer sche be a wo*m*man or goddesse
Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse
And myn is loue as of a creature
For which I tolde þe myn aduenture 1160
As to my cosyn / and my broþer sworn
I pose þat þou louedest hire biforn
wost þou nat wel the olde clerkes saw
That who schal ȝeue a louer eny lawe 1164
loue is a grettere lawe by my pan
Then may be ȝeue / to eny erþly man
Therfore posityf lawe and such decre
Is broke alway for love in ech degree 1168
A man moot needes loue maugre his heed
he may nought fle it þough he schulde be deed
Al be sche mayde or be sche widewe or wyf
And þat is nat likly al þy lyf 1172
To stonden in hire grace no more schal I
For wel þou wost þy seluen verrily
That þou and I been dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly vs gayneth no Raunsoun 1176
We stryue as doth the houndes for the boon [*leaf* 16, *back*]

They foughte alday and ȝit' here part' was noon
Ther com a kyte whil þat' þey were wroþe
That' bar awey the boon bitwixe hem boþe 1180
And þ*er*fore at' the kynges court' my broþer
Eche man for himself' þer is non other
Loue if' the list' for I loue and ay schal
And sothly leeue brother þis is al 1184
Eke in þis prisoun moote we endure
And euery of' vs take his auenture
Gret' was the stryf' and long' bytwixe hem tweye
ȝif' þat' I hadde leysir for to seye 1188
But' to the effect' it' happed on a day
To telle it ȝow as schortly as I may
A worþy Duk' þat' highte P*e*rotheus
That' felaw was to þe duk' Theseus 1192
Syn þilke day þat' þey were children lyte
Was come to Athenes his felawe to visite
And for to pley as he was wont to do
For in þis world he loued noman so 1196
And he loued him as tendurly agayn
So wel þey loued as olde bookes sayn
That' whan oon / was deed soþly to telle
his felawe wente and sought' him doun in helle 1200
But' of' þat' story lyst' me nought' to write
Duk' P*e*rotheus loued wel Arcite/
And hadde him knowe at' Thebes ȝeer by ȝeer
And fynally at' requeste and prayer 1204
Of' P*e*rotheus withoute any raunsoun
Duk' Theseus him leet out of' prisoun
Frely to go wher him lust' ouer al
In such a gyse as I ȝou telle schal 1208
This was the forward playnly to endite
Bitwixe Theseus and him Arcite
That' if' so were þat' Arcite were founde
Euere in his lyf' by daye night' or stounde 1212
In eny contre of' þis Theseus

And he were caught' it was acorded thus
That' with a swerd he scholde lese his heed [*leaf* 17]
Ther nas noon oþer remedy ne reed 1216
But' took' his leeue and homward he him spedde
Lete him be war his nekke liþ to wedde

HOw gret' a sorwe suffreþ now Arcite
The deþ he feleþ þorugh his herte smyte 1220
He weepeth weyleth cryeth pitously
To slen himself' he wayteþ pryuyly
he seyde allas þe day þat' I was born
Now is my prisoun werse þan was biforn 1224
Now is me schape eternally to dwelle
Nought' in purgatorie but' in helle
Allas þat' euer knewe I P*er*otheus
For elles had I dweld with Theseus 1228
I-fetered in his prisoun for euere moo
Than had I ben in blis and nat' in woo
Oonly þe sight' of' hir whom þat' I serue
þough þat' I hir grace may nat' deserue 1232
wold han sufficed right' ynough for me
O dere Cosyn Palamon q*uo*d he
þyn is þe victoire of' þis auenture
Ful blisfully in prisoun to endure 1236
In prisoun nay certes but' in paradys
wel hath fortune y-torned þe dys
That' haþ þe sight' of' hir and I the absence
For possible is / syn þou hast' hir presence 1240
And art' a knight' a worþi and an able
But' by som cas syn fortune is chaungable
Thou maist' to þy desir somtyme atteyne
But' I that am exiled and bareyne 1244
Of' alle grace / and in so gret' despeir
That' þer nys water erthe fyr ne eyr
Ne creature that' of' hem maked is
That' may me helpe ne comfort in þis 1248
wel ought' I sterue in wanhope and distresse

Far wel my lyf and al my Iolynesse
Allas why playnen folk so in comune
Of purueance of god or of fortune 1252
That ȝeueth him ful ofte in many a gyse [*leaf* 17, *back*]
wel better þan þei can hemself deuyse
SOm man desireþ for to haue richesse
That cause is of his morthre/ or gret seeknesse 1256
And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn
That in his hous is of his mayne slayn
Infinite harmes ben in þis mateere
we wote neuere what þing we preyen heere 1260
we faren as he þat dronke is as a mows
A dronke man wot wel he haþ an hous
But he not nat which þe righte wey is þider
And to a dronke man þe wey is slider 1264
And certes in þis world so faren we
we seeken faste after felicite
But we gon wrong ful ofte trewely
Thus may we seyen alle and namely I 1268
That wende haue had a gret opinioun
That ȝif I mighte skape fro prisoun
Than had I be in ioye and parfyt hele
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele / 1272
Syn þat I may not se ȝow Emelye
I nam but deed ther nys no remedye
Vppon þat oþer syde Palomon
whan he wiste þat arcite was agoon 1276
Such sorwe makeþ þat þe grete tour
Resowneth of his grete ȝollyng and clamour
The pure feteres of his schynes grete
weren of his bitter salte teres wete 1280
Allas quod he arcita cosyn myn
Of al oure strif god woot þe fruyt is þin
Thow walkest now in Thebes at þi large/
And of my woo þou ȝeuest litel charge/ 1284
Thou maiste seen þou hast wysdom and manhede

Assemble al þe folk' of' oure kynrede
And make a werre so scharpe in þis Cite
That' by som auenture or by som trete 1288
þou mayst/ hire wynne to lady and to wyf'
For whom þat' I most' nedes leese my lyf'
For as by wey of' possibilite [*leaf* 18]
Syn þou art at' þi large of' prisoun free 1292
And art' a lord gret is þin auantage
More þan is myn þat' sterue here in a kage
For I moot weepe and weyle whil I lyue
with al þe woo þat prisoun may me ȝyue 1296
And eek' with peyne þat' loue me ȝeueþ also
And doubleþ al my peyne and al my wo
Ther with þe fuyr of' Ielousye vpsterte
wiþinne his brest' and hent him by þe herte 1300
So wodly / þat' lik' was he to by-holde
The box tree or þe asschen deed and colde
Tho seyde he O goddes cruel þat gouerne
This world with byndyng' & wiþ word eterne 1304
And writen in þe table of' Athamaunte
ȝoure parlement and ȝoure eterne graunte
what is mankynde more to ȝow holde
Than is a scheep þat roukeþ in þe folde 1308
For slayn is man right' as anoþer beste
And dwelleþ eek' in prisoun and arreste
And haþ seknesse and greet' aduersite
And ofte tymes gilteles parde 1312
what gouernaunce is in ȝoure prescience
That' gilteles tormenteþ Innocence
And ȝet encreceþ this al my penaunce
That man is bounden to his obseruaunce 1316
For goddes sake to letten of his wille
Ther as a beste may al his lust' fulfille
And whan a beste is deed he ne haþ no peyne
But' man after his deth moot' wepe and pleyne 1320
þough in þis world he haue care and woo

wiþouten doute it may stonde so
The answer of þis I lete to diuinis
But wel I woot þat in þis world gret pyne is 1324
Allas I se a serpent or a þeef
That many a trewe man haþ doon mescheef
Gon at his large and wher him lust/ may turne
But I moste be in prisoun þurgh saturne 1328
And eek þorugh Iuno Ialous and eke wood [*leaf* 18, *back*]
That haþ destruyed wel neyh al þe blood
Of Thebes wiþ his waste walles wyde /
And venus sleeþ me on þat oþer syde / 1332
For Ielousye and fere of him Arcyte

NOw wol I stynte of Palamon a lite
And lete him stille in his prisoun dwelle
And of arcita for þan wol I telle 1336
The somer passeþ and þe nightes longe
Encrescen double wise the peynes stronge
Bothe of þe lover and þe prisoner
I noot which hath þe wofullere cheer 1340
For schortly for to sey þis Palomon
P*er*petuelly is dampned in prisoun
In cheynes and in feteres to be deed
And Arcite is exiled vpon his heed 1344
For eueremo as out of þat contre
Ne neuere mo schal he his lady see
Now louyeres / axe I þis question
who haþ þe worse Arcite or Palomon. 1348
That on may se his lady day by day
But in prisoun he moot dwelle alway
That oþer may wher him lust ryde or go
But seen his lady schal he neuer mo 1352
Now deemeth as ȝou luste ȝe þat can
For I wol telle forþ as I bigan

Whan þat arcite to Thebes come was
Ful ofte a day he swelde and seyde alas 1356
For seen his lady schal he neuer mo
And schortly to concluden al his wo
So moche sorwe had neuer creature
That is or schal whil þat þe world wol dure 1360
his sleep his mete his drynk is him by-raft
That lene he wexe / and drye as eny schaft/
his eyen holwe / grisly to biholde
his hewe falwe and pale as asschen colde 1364
And solitary he was and euer alone
And dwellyng al þe night making his moone
And if he herde song or Instrument/ [leaf 19]
Then wolde he wepe he mighte nought be stent 1368
So feble were his spirites and so lowe
And chaunged so þat no man couþe knowe
his speche noþer his vois þough men it herde
And in his gir for al þe world he ferde 1372
Nought oonly lyke þe louers maladye
Of hercos but raþer lik manye
Engendrud of humour malencolyk
Byforne in his selle fantastyk 1376
And schortly turned was al vp so doun
Bothe abyt and eek disposicioun
Of him þis woful louere daun arcite
what schulde I alway of his wo endite 1380
whan he endured hadde a ȝeer or tuoo
In þis cruel torment peyne and woo
At Thebes in his contre as I seyde
vpon a night in sleep as he him leyde 1384
him þought þat how þe venged god mercurie /
Byforn him stood and bad him to be murye
his slepy ȝerd in hond he bar vp right
An hat he wered vpon his heres bright / 1388

Arrayed was þis god as he took/ keepe
As he was whan þat' Argous took' his sleep
And seyde to athenes schalt' þou wende
Ther is þe schapen of' þy wo an ende 1392
And with þat' word arcite wook' and sterte
Now trewely how sore þat me smerte
Quod he to athenes riȝt' now wol I fare
Ne for þe drede of' deth schal I not spare 1396
To see my lady þat' I loue and serue
In hire presence I recche nat to sterue /
And with þat' word he caught' a gret myrour
And saugh þat' chaunged was al his colour 1400
And saugh his visage was in anoþer kynge
And right' anoon it ran him into mynde
That' seþþen his face was so disfigured
Of' maladie the which he haþ endured 1404
he mighte wel if' þat he bar him lowe [*leaf* 19, *back*]
lyue in athenes eueremore vnknowe
And see his lady wel neih day by day
And right' anon he chaunged his aray 1408
And cloþed him as a pore laborer
And al alone saue oonly a squyer
That' knew his pryuyte and al his cas
which was disgysed pourely as he was 1412
To athenes is he go þe nexte way
And to þe court / he went vpon a day
And at' þe ȝate he profred his seruyse
To drugge and drawe what so men wolde deuyse 1416
And schortly on þis matier for to seyn
he fel in office with a Chambirleyn
The which that' dwellyng' was with Emelye
For he was wys and couthe sone aspye 1420
Of' euery s*er*uau*n*t which þat serued here
wel couþe he hewe woode and water bere /
For he was ȝonge and mighty for þe nones
And þerto he was long' and bygge of' bones 1424

To doon þat eny wiȝht' can him deuyse
A ȝeer or two he was in þis seruise
Page of' þe chambre of' Emelye þe brigȝt'
And Philostrate he seide þat' he higȝt' 1428
But' half' so wel byloued a man as he
Ne was þer neuer in court' of' his degree
he was so gentil of' his condicioun
That' þoruh out' al þe court' was his renoun 1432
They seyde þat' it' were a charite
That Theseus would enhaunsen his degree
And putten him in worschipful seruyse
Ther as he miȝht' his vertu excersise 1436
And þus wiþinne a while his name spronge
Boþe of his dedes and of goode tonge
That Theseus haþ taken him so neer
That of' his Chambre he made him squyer 1440
And ȝaf' him gold to mayntene his degree
And eek' men brought him out' of' his countre
From ȝeer to ȝer ful pryuyly his rente [leaf 20]
But honestly and sleighly he it spente 1444
That no man wondred how þat' he it hadde
And þre ȝeer in þis wise his lyf' he ladde
And bar him so in pees and eek' in werre
Ther nas no man þat' Theseus haþ so derre 1448
And in þis blisse lete I now Arcite
And speke I wole of' Palomon alyte
IN derknes and orrible and strong' prisoun
This seuen ȝeer haþ seten Palomoun 1452
Forpyned what' for woo and for destresse
Who feleþ double sorwe and heuynesse
But' Palamon þat loue destreyneþ so
That' wood out' of' his witt he goþ for wo 1456
And eek' þerto he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly nat' oonly for a ȝeer
Who couþe ryme in englisch̄ propurly
His martirdam for-soþe it' am nat .I. 1460

Therfore I passe as lightly as I may
hit fel þat in þe seuenþe ȝeer in May
The þridde nigħt as olde bookes seyn
That al þis storie tellen more pleyn 1464
were it by auenture or destene
As whan a þing is schapen it schal be
That soone aftur þe mydnyght Palamoun
By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun 1468
And fleeth þe cite fast as he may goo
For he had ȝiue drinke his gayler soo
Of a clarre maad of certeyn wyn
with nercotykes and opye of Thebes fyn 1472
That al þat nigħt þoughħ þat men wolde him schake
The gayler sleep he mighte nouȝt/ awake
And þus he fleeþ as fast as euer he may
The nigħt was schort and faste by þe day 1476
That needes cost he moste himseluen hyde
And til a groue ther faste besyde
with dredful foot þan stalkeþ Palomoun
For schortly þis / was his opynyoun 1480
That in þat groue he wolde him hyde al day [leaf 20, back]
And in þe nigħt þen wolde he take his way
To Thebesward his frendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye / 1484
And shortelich or he wolde lese his lyf
Or wynnen Emelye vnto his wyf
This is þeffect of his entente playn.
Now wol I torne vnto Arcite agayn. 1488
That litel wiste how nyh þat was his care
Til þat fortune haþ broughħt him in the snare
The busy larke messager of May
Salueþ in hire song þe morwe gray 1492
And fyry Phebus ryseþ vp so brigħt
That þe orient laugheþ of þe ligħt
And wiþ his stremes dryeþ in þe greues
The siluer dropes hongyng in þe leeues 1496

And arcite þat' is in þe court' ryal
With Theseus his Squyer principal
Is risen and loketh on þe mery day
And for to doon his obs*er*uance to May 1500
Remembryng' of' þe poynt of' his desire
he on his courser stertyng' as þe fire
Is riden in to feeldes him to pleye
Out of' þe court' were it a myle or tweye 1504
And to þe groue of' which þat' I ȝow tolde
By auenture his wey he gan to holde
To make him a garland of' þe greues
were it' of' woodewynde or hawþorn leues 1508
And lowde he song' aȝens þe sonne scheene
May wiþ al þyn floures and þy greene
welcome be þou wel faire freissche may
In hope þat' I som grene gete may 1512
And fro his courser wiþ a lusty herte
Into þe groue ful lustily he sterte
And in a pathe he romed vp and doun
Ther by auenture þis Palamo*u*n 1516
was in a busche þat' no man might' him see
Ful sore afered of' his deþ was he
No þing' ne knew he þat' it was Arcite [*leaf* 21]
God wot he wolde haue trowed it ful lite 1520
But' soþ is seyde goon ful many ȝeres
That' feld haþ eyen and þe woode haþ eeres
It' is ful fair a man to bere him euene
For al day men meteþ atte vnset steuene 1524
Ful litel woot arcite of' his felawe
That was so neih to herken of' his sawe
For in þe busche he stynteþ now ful stille
whan þat arcyte had romed al his fille / 1528
And songen al þe Roundel lustily
In to a studie he fel sodeynly
As doþ þe' louers in here queynte geeres
Now in þe croppe / now doun in þe breres 1532

Now vp now doun as boket in a welle
Right' as þe friday soþly for to telle /
Now it schyneþ now it' reyneþ faste
Right' so gan gery venus ouercaste 1536
The hertes of' hire folk' right' as hir day
Is grisful right' so chaungeþ hire aray
Selde is þe fryday al þe wyke I-like
whan þat' arcite hadde songe he gan to sike 1540
And sette him doun wiþouten eny more
Alas q*uo*d he þat' day þat' I was bore
how longe Iuno thurgh þy cruelte
wiltow werreyen Thebes þe Citee 1544
Allas I-brought' is to confusio*un*
The blood royal of' Cadme and Amphio*un*
Of' Cadynus / þe which was þe furst' man
That' Thebes bulde or first' þe toun bygan 1548
And of' þat Cite first' was crowned kyng'
Of' his lynage / am I and his ofspring'
By verray line and of' his stok' ryal
And now I am so caytyf' and so þral 1552
That' he þat' is my mortal enemy
I serue him as his squyer pourely
And ȝet' doth Iuno me wel more schame
For I dar nought' byknowe my*n* owne name 1556
But' þer as I was wont' to hote arcite [*leaf* 21, *back*]
Now hoote I Philostrate nouȝt' worth a myte
Allas þou felle mars allas Iuno
Thus haþ ȝoure Ire owre lynage fordo 1560
Saue oonly me and wrecchid Palomo*un*
That' Theseus martyreþ in priso*un*
And ouer al this to slee me vtterly
Loue haþ his fyry dart' so brennyngly 1564
I stykid þorugh my trewe careful herte
That' schapen was my deth erst' þan my scherte
Ȝe slen me with ȝoure eyhen Emelye
Ȝe ben þe cause wherfore þat I dye 1568

Of' al þe remenant' of' al myn oþer care
Ne sette I nouȝt' þe mountaunce of' a tare
So þat' I couþe do ought' to ȝoure pleasaunce
And with þat' word he fel doun in a traunce 1572
A longe tyme and aftirward vpsterte
This Palamon þat þouȝte þurgh his herte
he felt' a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde
For Ire he quook/ he nolde no lenger abyde 1576
And whan þat he haþ herd arcites tale
As he were wood wiþ face deed and pale
he sterte him vp out' of' þe bussches þikke
And seyd arcyte / false traitour wikke/ 1580
Now art' þou hent/ þat' louest' my lady so.
For whom þat' I haue al þis peyne and wo.
And art' my blood and to my counseil sworn
And I ful ofte haue told þe heere byforn 1584
And hast' by-Iaped here þe duke Theseus
And falsly chaunged hast' þy name þus
I wol be deed or elles þou schalt' dye
Þou schalt' not' loue my lady Emelye 1588
But' I wil loue hire oonly and nomo
For I am Palomon þy mortal fo
And þough þat' I no wepen haue in þis place
But out of' prisoun am y-stert' by grace 1592
I drede not' þat' oþer þou schalt dye
Or þou ne schalt' not' loue Emelye
Chese which þou wilt' for þou schalt' not' asterte [leaf 22]
This arcite with ful despitous herte 1596
whan he him knew and had his tale herde
As fers as a lyoun pulleþ out' a swerde
And seide þus by god þat' sitteþ aboue
Nere it' þat' þou art sike and wood for loue 1600
And eek' þat þou no wepne has in þis place
But out' of' prisoun art' y-stert' by grace
That' þou ne schuldest' deyen of' myn hond
For I defye þe scurte and þe bond 1604

which þat' þou seyst' I haue maad to þe
For verray fool / þenk' þat' loue is fre
And I wol loue hire mawgre al þy mighť
But' for þou art' a gentil parfiȝt' knighť 1608
And wenest' to dereyne hire by batayle
haue heere my trouþe to morwe I nyl not fayle
wiþouten wityng' of' eny oþer wighť
That' heer I wol be founden as a knighť 1612
And bryngen harneys right' I-nough for þe
And ches þe best' and lef' þe worst' for me
And mete and drynke/ þis nighť wil I bryng
Inough for þe and cloþ for þy beddyng 1616
And if' so be þat' þou my lady wynne
And sle me in þis wood þat/ I am Inne
Thou maist' wel haue þy lady as for me
This Palomon answereþ I graunt' it þe 1620
And þus þey ben departed til a morwe
whan ech of' hem had leyd his feith to borwe
O Cupide / out' of' al charite
O regne þat' wolt' no felaw haue with þe 1624
Ful soþ is seyde / þat' loue ne lordschipe
wol not' his þonkes haue no felaschipe
wel fynden þat' arcite and Palamoun
Arcite is riden anon to þe toun 1628
And on þe morwe or it were day lighť
Ful priuely two harneys haþ he dight'
Boþe sufficaunt' and mete to darreyne
The batayl in þe feeld betwix hem tweyne 1632
And on his hors alone as he was born [leaf 22, back]
he caryed al þis harneys him byforn
And in þe groue at' tyme and place I-sette
This arcite and þis Palamon ben mette 1636
Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face
Right' as þe honterus in þe regne of' Trace
That' stondeþ in þe gappe with a spere
whan honted is þe lyoun or þe bere 1640

And herep him / comyng' in pe greues
And brekep bope pe bowes and pe leues
And penkep here comep my mortel enemy
wipoute faile he mot be deed or I 1644
For eyper I mot' slen him at' pe gappe
Or he moot slee me if' it' me myshappe
So ferden pey in chaungyng' of' here hew
AS fer as eyper of' hem oper knew 1648
Ther nas no good day ne no saluyng'
But' streyt' wipouten wordes rehersyng'
Euery of' hem helpep to armen oper
As frendly as he were his owen broper 1652
And panne wip / here scharpe speres stronge
They foyneden ech at oper longe
Tho it semed pat' pis Palomon
In his fightyng' were a wood lyoun 1656
And as a cruel tygre was arcite
And as wilde boores gonne pey smyte
That' fropen white as fome fropе wood
vp to pe ancle pey faught' in here blood 1660
And in pis wise I lete hem fiȝtyng' welle
And forpere I wol of' Theseus telle
The destyne mynistre general
That' excused in pe world ouer al 1664
The purueans pat' god hap seye byforn
So strong' it is pat pey pe world had sworn
The contrary of' a ping' by ȝe or nay
ȝet som tyme it schal falle vpon a day 1668
That' falleр nought' eft' in a pousend ȝeere
For certeynly oure appetites heere
Be it of' pees oper hate or loue [leaf 23]
Al is it reuled by pe sight' aboue 1672
This mene I now by mighty Theseus
That' for to honte is so desirous
And namely pe grete hert' in May
That' in his bed per daweth him no day 1676

That he nys clad and redy for to ryde
with hont/ and horn and houndes him byside
For in his hontyng' haþ he such delyt
That' is his ioye and his appetyt 1680
To been him self' þe grete hertes bane
For after may he serueþ now Dyane
Cleer was þe day as I haue told or þis
And Theseus with alle Ioye and blys 1684
with his ypolita þe fayre queene
And Emelye cloþed al in greene
On hontyng' be þay riden ryally
And to þe groue þat' stood þer faste by 1688
In which þer was an hert' as men him tolde
Duk' Theseus þe streyte wey haþ holde
And to þe launde he rydeþ him ful right'
There was þe hert' y-wont' to haue his flight 1692
And ouer a brook' and so forþ in his weye
This duk' wol haue of' him a cours or tweye
wiþ houndes which as him lust' to comaunde
And whan þis Duk' was come in to þe launde 1696
vnder þe sonne he lokeþ right' anon
he was war of arcite and Palomon
That' foughten breeme as it were boores tuo
The brighte swerdes wente to and fro 1700
So hidously þat with þe leste strook'
It' seemeþ as it wolde felle an Ook
But' what' þey were noþing' ȝit' he woot
This duk' wiþ spores / his courser he smoot 1704
And at' a stert' he was bitwix hem tuoo
And pullid out a swerd and cride hoo
Nomore vp peyne / of' leesyng' of' ȝour heed
By mighty mars anon he schal be deed 1708
That' smyteþ eny strook' þat' I may seen [*leaf* 23, *back*]
But' telleþ me what' mestir men ȝe been
That' ben so hardy for to fighten heere
wiþoute Iugge or oþer officere 1712

As it were in a lyste really
This Palamo*n* answerde hastily
And seyde sire what nedeþ wordes mo
we han þe deþ deserued boþe tuo 1716
Tuo woful wrecches been we and kaytyues
That' ben encombred of oure owne lyues
And as þou art' a rightful lord and Iuge
Ne ȝeue vs neyþer mercy ne refuge/ 1720
But' sle me first' for seynte Charite
But' sle my felaw eek' as wel as me
Or sle him first' for þough þou knowe hi*m* lyte
This is þy mortal fo þis is arcite 1724
þat' fro þy lond is banyscht/ on his heed
For which he haþ I-serued to be deed
For þis is he þat' come to þi gate
And seyde þat' / he highte Philostrate 1728
Thus haþ he Iaped þe many a yer
And þou hast' maad of him þy cheef' squyer
And þis is he þat' loueth Emelye
For siþ þe day is come þat I schal dye 1732
I make pleynly my confessioun
þat' I am / þe woful Palamo*un*
That' haþ þi prisou*n* broke wikkedly
I am þy mortal foo and it am I 1736
That' loueþ so hoote / Emely þe bright'
That' I wol dye p*re*sent in hire sight
Therfore I aske deeþ and my Iuwyse
But' slee my felaw in þe same wyse 1740
For boþe we haue serued to be slayn
This worthy duk' answerde anon agayn
And seide þis is / a schort' conclusio*un*
ȝour owne mouþ by ȝour owne confessio*un* 1744
haþ dempned ȝou boþe / and I wil it recorde
It needeþ nouȝt' to pyne ȝow wiþ þe corde
ȝe schul be deed by mighty mars þe reede [*leaf* 24]
The queen anon for v*er*ray wo*m*manhede 1748

Gan for to wepe and so dede Emelye
And alle þe ladies in companye
Great' pite was it as it' þought' hem alle
That eu*e*re such a chaunce schulde falle 1752
For gentil men þei were and of' gret estate
And noþing' but for loue was þis debate
And saw here bloody woundes wyde and sore
And all*e* þey cryde lesse and þe more 1756
Haue mercy lord vpon vs wo*m*men alle
And on here bare knees anoon þey falle
And wolde haue kissed his bare feet right as he stood
Till atte laste aslaked was his mood 1760
For pite renneþ sone in gentil herte
And þough he for Ire quok' and sterte
he haþ it al considered in a clause
The trespas of' hem boþe and here cause 1764
And al-þoughh his Ire here gylt' accused
ȝet' he in his resoun hem boþe excused
And þus he þoughh' þat' eu*e*ry maner man
wol help himself' in loue if' þat he can 1768
And eek' delyuer himself' out of' prisoun
And eek' in his hert/ had compassioun
Of' wo*m*men for þey wepen euer in oon
And in his gentil hert' he þoughh anoon 1772
And soþly he to himself' seyde fy.
vpon a lord þat' wol haue no mercy
But' be a lyo*u*n boþe in word in dede
To hem þat' ben in repentaunce and drede 1776
As wel as to a proud dispitious man
That' wol maynteyne þat he first bigan
That' lord haþ litel of' discrecio*u*n
That' in such caas can no diuisio*u*n 1780
But' wayteþ pride and humblenesse aft*er* oon
And schortly whan his Ire is ouer gon
He gan to loke on hem with eyen blake and lighh'
And spak' þese same wordes al in highh 1784

The god of' loue a benedicite [*leaf* 24, *back*]
how mighty and how gret a lord is he
Agayns his might' þer gayneth non obstacle
He may be cleped a god of' his miracle 1788
For he can maken at his owen gyse
Of' euery herte / as him lust' deuyse
Lo her is arcite and Palomon
That quytely / were out of' my prisoun 1792
And might' haue lyued in Thebes ryally
And witen I am here mortal enemy
And þat' here deþ lith in my might also
And ȝet' haþ loue maugre here eyȝen tuo 1796
I-brought hem hider boþe for to dye
Now lokeþ is nat þat' an heih folye
who may be a fole if' þat he loue
Byholde for goddes þaþ sitteþ aboue 1800
Se how þey blede be þey nought' wel arrayed
Thus haþ here lord þe god of' loue hem payed
here wages and here fees for here seruise
And ȝet' wenen they to ben wise / 1804
That' seruen loue for ought' þat may bifalle
But' þis is ȝette / þe beste game of' alle
That' sche for whom þey haue þis Ielousye
¶ Can hem þerfore as moche þank' as me 1808
Sche woot' no more of' al þis hoote fare
By god þan wot' a Cuckow or an hare
But' al moot' ben assayed hoot' or colde
A man moot' ben a fool oþer ȝong' or olde 1812
I woot' it by my self' ful ȝore a-gon
For in my tyme a seruant' was I on
And sythen þat' I knewe of' loues peyne
And wot' how sore it can a man destreyne 1816
As he þat' haþ often ben caught' in his lace
I ȝou forȝeue holly þis trespace
At' þe request' of þe queen þat kneleþ heere
And eek' of' Emely my suster deere 1820

And ȝe schullen boþe anon vnto me swere
That' neuer ȝe schullen my corowne dere
Ne make werre on me night' ne day [*leaf* 25]
But be my freendes alle þat ȝe may 1824
I ȝou forȝeue þis trespas euery dele
And þey him swore his axyng' euery dele
And him of' lordschip and of' mercy prayde
And he hem g*ra*unted mercy and þus he sayde 1828

TO speke of' real lynage and riches
Though þat' sche were a queen or a prynces
Ilk' of' ȝow boþe is worþy douteles
To wedde when tyme is but naþeles 1832
I speke as for my suster Emelye
For whom ȝe haue þis stryf' and Ielousye
ȝe woot' ȝoure self' sche may not' wedde two
At' oones þough ȝe faughten euer mo 1836
That' oon of' ȝow or be him loth or leef'
he may go pypen in an Iuy leef'
This is to say sche may nought' haue boþe
Al be ȝe neuer so Ielous ne so loþe 1840
For-þy I put' ȝou bothe in þis degre
That' ilk' of' ȝou schal haue his destyne
As him is schape / and herken in what' wyse
Lo here ȝour ende of' þat I schal deuyse 1844

My wil is þis. for playn conclusio*un*
wiþouten eny repplicacio*un*
If' þat' ȝou liketh tak' it' for þe best
That' euery of' ȝou schal go wher him lest' 1848
Frely wiþouten raunsou*n* or daungeer
And þis day fyfty wykes fer ne neer
Euerich of' ȝou schal bryng' an hundred knightes
Armed for lystes vp at alle rightes 1852
Al redy to derayne hir by batayle
And þus byhote I ȝou wiþouten fayle
vpon my trouthe and as I am a knight
That' whe þir of ȝow boþe þat haþ might' 1856

This is to seyn that' whepir he or þou
May wiþ his hundred as I spak' of' now
Sle his contrary or out' of' lystes dryue
Him schal I ȝeue Emelye to wyue 1860
To whom þat fortune ȝeueþ so fair a grace [*leaf 25, back*]
The lyste schal I make in þis place
And god so wisly on my sowle rewe
As I schal euen iuge ben and trewe 1864
ȝe schul non oþir ende wiþ me make
That' oon of' ȝow schal be deed or take
And if' ȝou þinkeþ þis is wel I-sayde
Say ȝoure avys and holdeþ ȝow a-payde 1868
This is ȝoure ende and ȝoure conclusio*un*
who lokeþ lightly now but' Palamo*un*
who sprynge þ vp for ioye but arcite
who couþe telle or who couþe endite 1872
The ioye þat is made in þis place
whan Theseus haþ don so fair a grace
But down on knees wente euery wight
And þanked him with al here hertes might 1876
And namely þe thebanes ofte siþe
And þus wiþ good hope and herte bliþe
They taken here leue and hom-ward þey ryde
To Thebes / wiþ olde walles wyde 1880
[. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

ATrow men wolde / it deme necligence
If' I forȝete to telle þe dispence
Of' Theseus þat' goþ so busily
To maken vp þe lystes rially 1884
& such a noble theatre as it was
I dar wel say þat' in þis world þer nas
The circuite þer was a myle aboute
walled of' stoon and dyched al wiþoute 1888
Round was þe schap in maner of' compaas

Ful of degre þe height of sixty paas
That whan a man was set in o degre
he letted nought his felaw for to se 1892
Estward þer stood a gate of marbul whit
westward such anoþer in opposit/
And schortly to conclude such a place
was non in erþe in so litel space 1896
In al þe lond þer nas no craftys man
That geometry or arsmetrike can
Ne purtreyour ne keruer of ymages [leaf 26]
That Theseus ne ȝaf hem mete and wages 1900
The theatre for to maken and deuyse
And for to don his right and sacrifise
he Estward haþ vpon þe gate aboue
In worschip of venus goddes of loue 1904
Don make an auter and an oratory
And westward in þe mynde and in memory
Of mars he haþ I-maked such an oþer
That coste largely of gold a foþer 1908
And northward in a toret on þe walle
Of alabaster whit and reed coralle
An oratory riche for to see
In worschip of Dyane goddes of chastite 1912
hath Theseus I-wrought in noble wise
But ȝit/ had I forgeten to deuyse /
The nobil keruyng and þe purtretures
The schap þe contynaunce of þe figures 1916
That weren in þe Oratories þre
Furst in þe temple of venus þou may se
wrought in þe wal ful pitous to byholde
Thre broken slepes and þe sykes colde 1920
The sacred teeres and þe waymentyng
The fuyry strokes and þe desiryng
That loues servauntȝ in þis lyf enduren
The othes þat by her couenantȝ assuren 1924
Plesance and hope desyr fool-hardynesse

Beaute and ȝouþe baudery and richesse
Charmes and sorcery lesynges and flatery
Dispense busynes and Ielousy 1928
That werud of ȝolo guldes a gerland
And a cukkow sittyng on hire hand
Festes instrumentȝ carols and daunces
Lust and array and al þe circumstaunces / 1932
Of loue which I rekned and reken schal
Ech by oþer / were peynted on þe wal
And mo þan I / can make of mencio*u*n
For sothly al þe mou*n*t of Setheroun 1936
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng [*leaf* 26, *back*]
was schewed on þe wal here portrayng
wiþ alle þe Gardyn and al þe lustynes
Nought was forȝete þe porter ydelnes 1940
Ne Narcisus þe fayr of ȝore agon
Ne ȝet þe foly of kyng Salomon
Ne eek þe strengþe / of him hercules
Thenchauntementȝ of Medea and Cerces 1944
Ne of turnus of which þe hard fuyry corage
The riche Cresus caytif in seruage
Thus may we see þat wisdom and riches
Beaute ne sleight strengþe ne hardynes 1948
Ne may wiþ venus holde champ*ar*tye
For as sche lust þe world þan may sche gye
lo al þis folk I-caught were in hire trace
Til þay for wo fuloften sayde allas 1952
Sufficeþ þis ensample oon or tuo
And þough I couþe reken a þousend mo
The statu of venus glorious for to see
was naked fletyng in þe large see 1956
And fro þe nauel doun al couered was
with wawes grene as bright as eny glas
A citole in hire right hond hadde sche
And on hir heed ful semely on to see 1960
A rose garland ful swete and wel smellyng

And abouen hire heed dowues fleyng'
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido
vpon his schuldres were wynges two 1964
And blynd he was as it' is often seene
A bowe he bar and arwes fair and greene
Why schuld I nouȝt' as wel telle ȝou alle
The portraiture þat' was vpon þe walle 1968
wiþ in þe temple of' mighty mars þe reede
Al peynted was þe wal in lengþ and breede
loke to þe Estres of' þe grisly place
That' hight' þe gret' tempul of' mars in trace 1972
In þat' colde and in þat' frosty regio*un*
Ther as mars haþ his souereyn mancio*un*
First' on þe wal was peynted a foreste [*leaf* 27]
In which þer dwelled neyther man ne beste / 1976
wiþ knotty knarry bareyn trees olde
Of' stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde
In which þer ran as wymbul in a swough
As it' were a storme schuld berst' euery bough 1980
And downward on an hil vnder a bent /
Ther stood þe tempul of' marcȝ armypotent /
wrought' al of' burned steel of' which þentre
was long' and streyt' and gastly for to see 1984
And þer out/ came a rage of' suche aprise
That' it' maad al þe gates for to rise
The norþen light' in at' þe dore schon
For wyndow on þe walle was þer noon 1988
Thorugh þe which men might' no light discerne
The dores wer all*e*. ademauntȝ eterne
I-clenched ouer thward and endelong/
with Iren tough / and for to make it' strong' 1992
Euery piler þe tempul to susteene
was tonne greet of' Iren bright and schene
Ther saugh I furst' þe derk' ymaginyng'
Of' felony and al the compassyng' 1996
The cruel Ire as reed as eny gleede

The pike-purs and eek' þe pale drede
The smyler wiþ þe knyf' vnder his cloke
The schipne brennyng' with þe blake smoke 2000
The tresoun of' þe murþeryng' in þe bed
The open werres wiþ woundes al bibled
kuttud with bloody knyf' and scharp manace
Al ful of chirkyng' was þat sory place 2004
The sleer of himself' ȝet saugh̄ I þere
here herte blood haþ baþed al his here
The nayl y-dryue in þe schode a-nygh̄t
The colde deþ with mouþ gapyng' vpright 2008
A-myddes of' þe tempul set/ meschaunce
wiþ sory comfort' and euel contynaunce
I saugh woundes laughyng' in here rage
The hunt' strangled with wilde bores corage 2012
[. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
The sowe freten þe child right in þe cradel [*leaf 27, back*]
The cook' I-skalded for al his longe ladel 2020
Nought' beþ forgeten þe infortune of' mart
The carter ouer-ryden wiþ his cart'
vnder þe whel ful lowe he lay a doun
Ther were also of' martȝ diuisioun 2024
The barbour and þe bowcher and þe smyth̄
That' forgeþ scharpe swerdes on his stith
And al aboue depeynted in a tour
Saw I conquest sittyng' in gret' honour 2028
with þe scharpe swerd ouer his heed
hangynge by a sotil twyne threed
Depeynted was þer þe slaught' of' Iulius
Of' grete Nero and of' Anthonius 2032
Al be þat' ilke tyme þey were vnborn

ȝet' was here deth depeynted þer byforn
By manasyng' of' marcȝ right' by figure
So was it schewed right' in þe purtreture 2036
As is depeynted in sterres aboue
who schal be slayn or elles deed for loue
Sufficeþ oon ensample in stories olde

[*A break of one line in the MS.*]

The statue of' mars vpon a carte stood
Armed and loked grym as he were wood
And ouer his heed þer schyneþ two figures
Of' sterres þat been cleped in scriptures 2044
That oon puella þat' oþur Rubius
This god of' armes was arayed þus
A wolf' þer stood byforn him at his feet
wiþ eyen reed and of' a man he eet 2048
wiþ sotyl pencel depeynted was þis storie
In redoutyng' of' mars and of' his glorie
Now to þe temple of' Dyane þe chaste
As schortly as I can I wol me haste 2052
To telle ȝou al þe descripciou)
Depeynted ben þe walles vp and doun
Of' huntyng' and of' schamefast' chastite
Ther saugh I how woful Calystope / 2056
whan þat Dyane was agreued with here [*leaf* 28]
was turned from a wo*m*man to a bere
And after was sche maad þe loode-sterre
Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre 2060
hire son is eek' aftir as men may see
Ther sawȝ I dyane turned in til a tree
I mene nouȝt' þe goddes Dyane
But' Peneus douȝ*ter* / þe whiche hight dane 2064
Ther saugh̄ I atheon an hert' I-maked
For vengance þat' he saugh̄ Dyane al naked
I saugh̄ how þat his houndes han him caught'
And freten him for þat' þey knew him naught 2068
ȝit' I-peynted was a litel forþer more

how atthalaunce huntyd þe wilde bore
And Melyagre / and many anoþ*er* mo
For which Dyane wrought' him care and woo 2072
Ther saugh I eek' many anoþer story
The which me list' not' drawe in to memory
This goddess son / an hert' ful hy he seet
with smale houndes at hire feet 2076
And vnder-neþe hir feet' sche had þe moone
wexyng' it was and schulde wane soone
In gaude greene hire statue cloþed was
wiþ bowe in hande and arwes in a cas 2080
hir eyȝen caste sche ful lowe adoun
Ther Pluto haþ his derke regioun
A wo*m*man trauailyng' was hire biforn
But for hire child so longe was vnborn 2084
Ful pitously lucyna gan she calle
And seyde help / for þou mayst' best' of' alle /
wel couþe he peynte lyfly þat it wrouȝt
wiþ many a floren he þe hewes bought' 2088
Now been þise listes maad and Theseus /
That' at his grete cost' arayed þus
The temples and þe Theatres euery del
whan it' was don it' liked him right' wel 2092
But' stynt' I wil of' Theseus a lite
And speke of' Palomon and of' Arcite
THe day approcheþ of' her attournyng' [*leaf* 28, *back*]
That' euery schuld an hundred kniȝtes bryng' 2096
The batail to derreyne as I ȝou tolde
And til athenes her couenant to holde
hath euery of' hem brought' an .C. knightes
wel armed for þe werre at alle rightes 2100
And sikerly þer trowed many a man
That / neuer siþþen þat' þis world bigan
For to speke of' knighthod of' her hond
As fer as god haþ maked see or lond 2104
Nas of' so fewe so good a company

For euery wight' þat' loueþ chyualry
And wold his þankes haue a passant name
he preyed þat' he might' be of' þat game 2108
A wel was him þat þerto chosen was
For if' þer felle to morwe such a caas
I knowe wel þat' euery lusty knight/
That' loueþ p*ar*amours and hath his might' 2112
were it in Engelond or elles where /
They wold here þankes wilne to be þere
To fight for / a lady benedicite
It' were a lusty sighte for to see 2116
And right' so ferden þey with Palomon
wiþ him þer wente knyghtes many oon
Some wol ben armed in an haburg*oun*
In a bright brest' plat' and a gypo*un* 2120
And som wold haue a peyre plates large
And som wold haue a prys scheld or a targe
Som wol been armed on here legges weel
And haue an ax and eek' a mace of' steel 2124
Ther nys no newe gyse þat' it' nas old
Armed were þey as I haue told
Euerich after his owen opinio*un*
Ther maistow se comyng' wiþ Palomo*un* 2128
ligurge himself' þe grete kyng' of Trace
Blak' was his berd and manly was his face
The cercles of' / his eyen in his heed
They gloweden bytwixe ȝolw and reed 2132
And lik' a griffoun loked he aboute [*leaf* 29]
with kempe heres on his browes stowte
his lymes greet' his brawnes hard and stronge
his schuldres brood his armes rounde and longe 2136
And as þe gyse was in his contre
Ful heye vpon a chare of' gold stood he
wiþ foure white boles in a trays
In stede of cote armour in his harnays 2140
wiþ nayles ȝolwe and bright as eny gold

he had a bere skyn cole-blak' for old
his lange heer y-kempt' byhynd his bak'
As eny rauen fether it schon for blak' 2144
A wreþe of' gold arm-gret' and huge of' wight/
Vpon his heed set' ful of' stoones bright
Of' fyne rubeus and of' fyn dyamauntȝ
Aboute his chare wente with white alauntȝ 2148
Twenty and mo as grete as eny stere
To hunt at' þe lyoun or at' þe bere
And folwed him with mosel fast' I-bounde
Colerd of' gold and torettȝ fyled rounde 2152
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed ful wel wiþ hertes stern and stoute
With arcita in stories as men fynde
The gret' Emetreus þe kyng' of' ynde 2156
Vppon a steede bay trapped in steel
Couered wiþ cloþ and of' gold dyapred wel
Cam rydyng' lyk' / þe god of' armes mars
his coote armour was of' a cloþ of' Tars 2160
Cowched of' perlys whyte round and grete
his sadil was of' brend gold newe bete
A mantelet vpon his schuldre hangyng
Bret-ful of Rubies reed and fir sparclyng 2164
His crispe her lik' rynges was I-ronne
And þat' was ȝalwe and gliteryng' as þe sonne
his nose was heigh his eyen were cytryne
His lippes rounde his colour was sangwyn 2168
A fewe freknes in his face y-spreynd
Betwixe ȝolwe and somdel blak' y-meynd
And as a lyoun he his lokyng' caste [*leaf* 29, *back*]
Of fyue and twenty ȝeer his age I caste 2172
his berd was wel bygonne for to sprynge
His voys was as a trumpe thunderynge
vpon his heed he wered a laurer grene
A garlond freisch and lusty for to sene 2176
vpon his hond he bar for his delyt

An Egle tame as eny lylie whyt'
An hundred lordes had he with him þer
Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger 2180
Ful richely in alle maner þinges
For trusteþ wel þat dukes Erles kynges
were gadred in þis noble companye
For loue and for encres of' Chiualrye / 2184
Aboute þe kyng' þer ran on euery part
Ful many a tame lyoun and lepart'
And in þis wise þis lordes alle and some
Been on the sonday to þe cite kome 2188
Aboute prime and in þe toun alight'
This Theseus þis duk' þis worþy knight'
whan he had brought' hem in to þis cite
And ynned hem euerich at' his degre 2192
he festeþ hem and doþ so gret labour
To esen hem and do hem al honour
That ȝit' men wene þat' no mannes wyt/
Of' non estat' þat' cowde amenden it/ 2196
The mynstralcye þe seruyce at þe feste
The grete ȝiftes to þe most' and leste
The riche aray of' Thebes his paleys
Ne who sat' first' ne last' vpon þe deys 2200
what ladies fayrest' ben or best' daunsyng'
Or which of' hem can daunce best' or syng'
Ne who most' felyngly spekeþ of' loue
what' haukes sitten on þe perche aboue 2204
what' houndes lyen in þe floor a-doun
Of' al þis make I now no mencioun
But' of' þeffect' þat' þinkeþ me þe beste /
Now comth þe poynt' and herkneth if' ȝou leste 2208
The sonday night' or day bigan to springe [leaf 30]
when Palomon þe larke herde synge
Al þough it' were nought' day by houres tuo
ȝit sang' þe larke and Palomon also / 2212
with holy herte and with an heih corage

He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage
Vnto þe blisful Cithera benigne
I mene Venus honorable and digne 2216
And in here hour he walkeþ forþ a paas
Vnto þe lystes þer hir temple was
And doun he kneleþ and wiþ humble cheer
And her sore and seide as ȝe schal heer 2220

FAirest' O fairest / O lady myn Venus
Doughter of Ioue and spouse to Vlcanus
Thou glader of þe mount/ of' Citheroun
For þilke loue þou haddest' to adeoun 2224
haue pite on my bitter teeres smerte
And tak' myn humble prayer to þin herte
Allas I ne haue no langage for to telle
Theffectes ne þe tormentȝ of' myn helle 2228
Myn herte may myn harmes nat bewreye
I am so confus þat I may not seye
But mercy lady bright þat knowest wel
My þoughť and felest' what harm þat I fel 2232
Consider al þis and rew vpon my sore
As wisly as I schal for euermore /
Enforce my mighť þi trewe seruant' to be
And holde werre alday wiþ chastite 2236
That' make I myn avow so ȝe me helpe
I kepe nat of' armes for to ȝelpe
Ne nat' I aske to morn to haue victorie
Ne renoun in þis caas ne Veyne glorie 2240
Of' pris of' armes blowyng' vp and doun
But' I wolde haue ful possessioun)
Of' Emelye and dye in þi seruise
Fynd þou þe maner how and in what' wyse 2244
I recche nat' but' it' may better be
To haue victorie of' him or he of' me
So þat' I haue my lady in myn armes [*leaf* 30, *back*]
For þough so be þat' mars be god of armes 2248
And ȝe be venus þe goddes of' loue

ȝoure vertu is so gret' in heuen aboue
Thy temple wol I worschipe euermo
And on þin auter wher I ryde or go 2252
I wol do sacrifice and fyres beete
And if' ȝe wol nat' so my lady sweete
Than pray I þe to morwe with a spere
That' arcita me þurgh the herte bere / 2256
Thanne rekke I nat' whan I haue lost' my lyf'
Though þat' arcite haue hir to his wyf'
This is þeffect/ and ende of' my prayeere
ȝif' me my love my blisful lady deere 2260
whan thorisoun was doon of' Palomon
his sacrifice he dede and þat anoon
Ful pitously with alle circumstances
Al telle I nat' as now his obseruances 2264
But' at' þe last' þe statu of' venus schook'
And made a signe wherby þat he took'
That' his prayer accepted was þat' day
For þough þe signe schewed a delay 2268
ȝet' wist' he wel þat graunted was his boone
And wiþ glad herte he went' him hom ful soone
The þrid hour in equal þat' Palomon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon 2272
vp roos þe sonne and vp roos Emelye
And to þe temple of' Dian gan sche hye
Hir maydens þat' sche wiþ hir þider ladde
Ful redily wiþ hem þe fyr þey hadde 2276
Thencens / þe cloþes and þemenant al
That to þe sacrifice longen schal
The hornes ful of' meth as is þe gyse /
Ther lakkeþ nouȝt' to do here sacrifise 2280
Smokyng' þe temple ful of' cloþes faire
This Emelye wiþ herte debonaire
Hir body wessch wiþ wtir of' a welle
But how sche dide I ne dar nat' telle 2284
But' it be eny þing' in general [leaf 31]

And ȝet' it were a game to here it al
To him þat meneth wel it were no charge
But it is good a man be at his large 2288
hir brighte her was kempt' vntressed al
A Corone of' a grene Ok' cerial
vpon hir heed was set' ful fair and meete
Tuo fyres on þe auter gan sche beete 2292
And did hir þinges as men may biholde
In state of' Thebes and þe bokes olde
whan kynled was þe fyre wiþ pitous cheere /
vnto Dyan sche spak' as ȝe may heere 2296
O chaste goddes of' þe woodes greene
To whom boþe heuen and erþe and see is seene
Queen of' þe regne of' pluto derk' and lowe
Goddes of' maydenes þat' myn hert has knowe 2300
Ful many a ȝeer / ȝe woot' what' I desire
As keep me fro þe vengans of' þilk' yre
That' atheon aboughte trewely
Chaste goddesse wel wost' þou þat I 2304
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf'
Ne neuer wol I be no loue ne wyf'
I am ȝit' þou wost' of' þi company
A mayden and loue huntyng' and venery 2308
And for to walken in þe woodes wylde
And nought' to ben a wyf' and be with chylde
Nouȝt' wol I knowe þe company of' man
Now helpe me lady syþnes ȝe may and kan 2312
For þe formes þat' þou hast' in þe
And Palomon þat' haþ such loue to me
And eek' arcite þat loueþ me so sore
This grace I praye þe wiþouten more 2316
And sende loue and pees betwix hem two
And fro me torne a wey here hertes so
That' al here hoote loue and here desire
Al here besy torment and al here fyre 2320
Be queynt' or turned in anoþer place

And if so be þou wol do me no grace
Or if my destyne be schapid so [*leaf* 31, *back*]
That I schal needes haue on of hem two 2324
So send me him þat most desireþ me
Biholde goddes of clene chastite
The bitter teeres þat on my cheekes falle
Syn þou art mayde and keper of vs alle 2328
My maydenhode þou kepe and wel conserue
And whil I lyue a mayde I wil þe serue /
The fyres bren vpon þe auter cleer
whil Emelye was in hire preyer 2332
But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynt
For right anon on of þe fyres queynt
And quyked agayn and after þat anon
That oþer fyr was queynt and al a-gon 2336
And as it queynt it made a whistelyng
As doþ a wete brond in his brennyng
And at þe brondes end out ran anoon
As it were bloody dropes many oon 2340
For which so sore agast was Emelye
That sche wel neih mad was and gan to crie
For sche ne wiste what it signifyed
But oonely for feere þus sche cryed 2344
And wepte þat/ it was pite to heere
And þer-wiþ-al Dyane gan appeere
wiþ bow in hond right as a hunteresse
And seyd a doughter stynt þyn heuynesse 2348
Among þe goddes hye it is affermed
And by eterne word write & confermed
Thou schalt be wedded vnto oon of þo
That haue for þe so moche care and wo 2352
But vnto which of hem may I nat telle
Far wel for I may her no lenger dwelle
The fyres which þat on myn auter bren
Schuln þe declare or þat þou go hen 2356
Thyn aduenture of loue and in þis caas

And wiþ þat' word þe arwes in þe caas
Of' þe goddesse clatren faste and rynge
And forþ sche went' and made a vanysschynge 2360
For which this Emelye astoneyd was [*leaf* 32]
And seide what amounteþ þis allas
I put' me vnder þy protecciou*n*
Dyane and in þi disposicioun 2364
And hoom sche goþ anon þe nexte way
This is þeffect/ þer nys no mor to say
The nexte houre of' mars folwynge þis
Arcite to þe temple walkyd is / 2368
To fyry mars to doon his sacrifise /
with al þe rightes of' his payen wise
with pitous herte and heih deuocio*un*
Right' thus to mars he sayd his orisou*n* 2372
O stronge god þat in þe reynes cold
Of' trace honoured and lord art þou hold
And hast' in euery regne and euery land
Of' armes al þe bridel in þy hand 2376
And hem fortunest' as þe lust' deuyse
Accept/ of' me my pitous sacrifise
If' so be þat' my ȝouthe may deserue
And þat' my mig̃ht be worþi to des*e*rue 2380
Thy godhed þat/ I may be on of' þine
Then pray I þe / to rewe on my pyne
For þilke peyne and þat hoote fuyre
The which whilom þou brendest for desyre 2384
whan þat' þou vsedest' þe gret' bewte
Of' faire freissche Venus þat is so free
And haddest' hir in armes at þy wille
And þoug̃h þe ones on a tyme mysfille 2388
whan Vlcanus had caug̃ht þe in his laas
And fand þe liggyng' by his wyf' allaas
For þilke sorwe þat' was in þin herte
haue reuthe as wel vpon my peynes smerte 2392
I am ȝong' and vnkonnyng' as þou wost'

And as I trowe / wiþ loue offendid most' /
That' euer was eny lyues creature /
For sche þat doth me / al þis wo endure 2396
Ne rekkeþ neuer wheþer I synke or flete
And wel I woot' or sche me mercy heete
I moot' wiþ strengþe wyn hir in þe place [*leaf* 32, *back*]
And wel I wot/ wiþouten help or grace 2400
Of' þe / ne may my strengthe nought' auayle
Then help me lord to morn in my batayle
For þilke fyr that whilom brende þe
As wel as þis fire now brenneþ me 2404
And do to morn þat' I haue þe victorie
Myn be þe trauail al þin be þe glorie
Thy souerein tempul wol I most' honouren
Of' any place / and al way most' labouren 2408
In þy plesa*un*ce / and þy craftes strong'
And in þy tempul I wol my baner hong'
And alle þe armes of' my companye
And euermore vnto þat' day I dye 2412
Eterne fyr I wol bifore þe fynde
And eek' to þis / avow I wol me bynde
My berd myn heer þat' hangeth longe a doun
That' neuer ȝit' ne felt' offensioun 2416
Of' rasour ne of' schere I wol þe ȝiue
And be þy trewe se*r*uaunt whiles I lyue
lord haue rowþe vppon my sorwes sore
ȝif' me þy victorie I aske no more 2420
The preyer stynt/ of' Arcita þe strange
The rynges on þe tempul dore þat' hange
And eek' the dores clatereden ful fast'
Of' which arcita som what' was agast' 2424
The fires brenden on þe auter bright'
That' it' gan al þe tempul for to light/
A swote smel anon þe ground vp ȝaf'
And arcita anon his hand vp haf' 2428
And more encens in to þe fyr ȝet cast

with oþir rightes and þan atte last'
The statu of' mars bigan his hauberk' ryng'
And with þat' soun / he herd a murmuryng' 2432
Ful lowe and dym / and sayde þis victorie
For which he ȝaf' to mars honour and glorie
And þus with ioye and hope wel to fare
Arcite anoon / vnto his Inne is fare / 2436
As fayn as foul is of' þe brighte sonne [leaf 88]
And right' anon such stryf' is bygonne
For þat grauntyng' in þe heuen aboue
Bitwix venus and þe goddes of' loue 2440
And marcz þe sterne god armypotent'
That' Iupiter was busy it' to stent'
Til þat' þe pale Saturnes þe colde
That knew so many of' auentures olde 2444
Fond in his exp*e*riens an art/
That' he ful sone haþ plesyd eu*er*y part'
And soþ is sayd eelde haþ gret' auantage
In eelde is boþe wisdom and vsage 2448
Men may þe eelde at'-ren but nat' at'-rede
Saturne anon to stynte stryf' and drede
Al be it' þat' / it' be agayns his kynde
Of' al þis stryf' he can remedy fynde 2452
My deere dou*ȝt*er venus q*uo*d Satourne
My cours þat haþ so wyde for to tourne
haþ more power þan woot' eny man
Myn is þe drenchyng' in þe see so wan 2456
Myn is þe prison in þe derke cote
Myn is þe stranglyng' & hangyng' by þe þrote
The murmur and þe cherles rebellyng'
The groynyng' and þe pryue enpoysonyng' 2460
I do vengance and pleyn correctio*un*
whiles I dwelle in þe signe of' þe lyo*un*
Myn is þe ruen of' þe hihe halles
The fallyng' of' þe toures and þe walles 2464
Vpon þe mynour or þe Carpenter

I slowh Sampso*un* in schakyng' þe piler
And myne ben þe maladies colde
The derke tresoun and þe castes olde 2468
Myn lokyng' is þe fadir of' pestilens
Now wepe nomore I schal do my diligence
That' Palomon þat is myn owen knight'
Schal haue his lady as þou him bihight 2472
þow marcz schal kepe his kniȝt ȝet' neuerþeles
Bitwixe ȝou þ*er* moot som tyme be pees
Al be ȝe nouȝt of' oo complexio*un* [*leaf* 33, *back*]
That' ilke day causeþ such diuisio*un* 2476
I am þi ayel redy at' þy wille
wepe þou no more I wol þi lust' fulfille
Now wol I stynt' of' þe goddes aboue
Of' mars and of' venus goddes of' loue 2480
And telle ȝou as pleinly as I can
The grete effecte for þat' I bigan
[. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
GRet' was þe fest' in Athenus þat' day
And eek' þat' lusty sesoun of' þat' may 2484
Made euery wiȝt' to ben in such plesaunce /
That' al the monday iousten þey and daunce
And spende hit' in venus heigh seruise /
But' by þe cause þat þey schuln arise 2488
Erly a morwe for to see þat' fight'
vnto þeir rest' wente þey at' nyght'
And on þe morwe whan þe day gan spryng'
Of' hors and hernoys noyse and clateryng' 2492
Ther was in þe oostes al aboute
And to þe paleys rood þer many a route
Of' lordes vpon steede and on/palfreys
Ther mayst' þou see deuysyng' of' herneys 2496
So vncowþ and so riche wrought' & wel
Of' goldsmithry of' browdyng' and of' steel

The scheldes bright / testers and trappures
Gold-beten helmes / hauberks and cote armures 2500
lordes in paramentȝ on her coursers
knightes of retenu and eek squyers
Rayhyng þe speres and helmes bokelyng
Girdyng of scheeldes wiþ layneres lasyng
Ther as need is / þey were noþing ydel
Ther fomen steedes on þe golden bridel
Gnawyng and faste / armurers also
with fyle and hamer prikyng to and fro 2508
ȝemen on foote / and knaues many oon
wiþ schorte staues as þikke as þey may goon
Pypes trompes nakers and Clariounes
þat in þe batail blewe bloody sownes / 2512
The paleys ful of pepul vp and doun [leaf 34]
heer þre / þer / ten / haldyng her questioun
Dyuynyng of þis Thebans knightes two
Som seyden þus / som seyd it schal be so 2516
Som heelde with him with þe blake berd
Som wiþ þe ballyd som wiþ þikke hered
Som sayd he loked grym as he wold fight
he haþ a sparth of .xx^ti pound of wight 2520
Thus was þe halle ful of deuynyng
Lang after þat þe sonne gan to spryng
The gret Theseus / þat of his sleep is awaked
with menstralcy and noyse þat was maked 2524
held ȝit þe chambre of his paleys riche
Til þat Thebanes knyȝtes boþe I-liche
honoured weren and in to Paleys fet
Duk Theseus was at a wyndow set 2528
Arayed right as he were god in trone
The pepul preseth þider was ful sone
him for to seen / and doon him reuerence
And eek herken his hest and his sentence 2532
An herowd on a skaffold made a hoo
Til al þe noyse of þe pepul was I-doo

And whan he sawh þe pepul of noyse al stille
Thus schewed he þe mighty dukes wille 2536
The lord haþ of his heih discrecio*u*n
Considered þat it were destruccio*u*n
To gentil blood to fighten in þis wise
Of mortal batail now in þis Emprise 2540
were for to schapen þat þey schuld not dye
he wol his firste purpos modifye
No man þ*er*fore vp peyne of los of lyf
No maner schot/ ne pollax ne schort knyf 2544
In to þe lystes sende or þider bryng
Ne schorte swerd for to stoke þe bytyng
No man ne drawe ne bere by his side /
Ne noman schal to his felawe ryde 2548
But oon cours with a scharpe spere
Feyne if him lust on foote himself to were
And he þat is at meschief schal be take / [*leaf* 34, *back*]
And nat slayn but be brought to þe stake 2552
That schal be ordeyned on eyþer syde
But þider he schal by force and þer abyde /
And if so falle a cheuenten be take
On eyþer side or elles sle his make / 2556
No lenger schal þe turneynge laste
God spede ȝou goþ forþ and ley on faste
wiþ long swerd and wiþ mace fiȝt ȝour fille
Goþ now ȝour way þis is þe lordes wille 2560
The voice of þe poepul touchiþ heuen
So lowde cried þei with mylde steuen
God saue such a lord þat is so good
he wilneþ no destruccio*u*n of blood 2564
vp goþ þe trompes and þe melodye
And to þe lystes ryde þe companye /
By ordynaunce þurgh þe cite large
Hangyng wiþ cloþ of gold and not wiþ Sarge 2568
Ful lik a lord þis nobul Duk cam ryde
These tuo Thebans on eyþ*er* side

And after rood þe queen and Emelye
And aft*er* hem of' ladyes anoþ*er* companye 2572
And after hem of' comunes aft*er* here degre
And þus þey passeden þurgh þat' cite
And to þe lystes come þei by tyme
It' nas not' of' þe day ȝet' fully pryme 2576
whan sette was Theseus riche and hye
ypolita þe queen and Emelye
And oþer ladyes in here degrees aboute
vnto þe settes passeþ al þe route 2580
And westward þorugh þe ȝates of' mart'
Arcite and eek' þe hundred of' his part
with baners ys I-entred right' anoon
And þat' selue moment' Palomon 2584
Is vnder Venus Estward in þat' place
with baner whyt' and hardy cheer of' face
IN al þe world to seeke vp and doun
So euen wiþoute Variacioun 2588
Ther nere suche companyes tweye [*leaf* 35]
For ther nas noon so wys þat' cowþe seye
That' any had of' oþer auauntage
Of' worthines ne staat/ ne of' visage 2592
So euene were þey chosen for to gesse
And in two Renges faire þey hem dresse
And whan he names I-rad were eu*er*ychon
That' in here nombre gile were þ*er* noon 2596
Tho were þe gates schitt' and cried lowde
Dooþ now ȝour deuoir ȝonge knightes proude
The heraldȝ laften here prikyng' vp & dou*n*
Now ryngede þe tromp and Clario*un* 2600
Ther is no more to say but' Est' and west'
In goþ þe speres in to þe Rest'
Ther seen men who can Iuste and who can ryde
In goþ þe scharpe spere in to þe side 2604
Ther schyueren schaftes vpon schuldres þyk'
he feeleþ þurgh þe herte spon þe prik'

vp sprengen speres on twenty foot on hight
Out' goon þe swerdes as þe siluer bright' 2608
The helmes þer to-hewen and to-schrede
Out' brast' þe blood wiþ stoute stremes reede
with mighty maces þe bones þay to-breste
he þurgh þe þikkest' of' þe þrong' gan þreste 2612
Ther stomblen steedes strong' and doun can falle /
he rolled vnder foot' as doþ a balle
he feyneþ on his foot wiþ his tronchoun
And him hurteleþ with his hors a doun 2616
He þurgh þe body hurt' is and siþþen take
Maugre his heed and brouȝt' vnto þe stake /
As forward was right' þer he most' abyde /
Anoþer lad is on þat' oþer syde 2620
And som tyme doþ Theseus hem to rest'
hem to refreissche and drinke if' hem lest'
Ful ofte a-day haue þis Thebans twoo
Togider y-met' and wrought' his felaw woo 2624
vnhorsed haþ ech oþer of' hem tweye
Ther nas no Tygyr in þe vale of' Galgopleye
whan þat' hir whelp is stole whan it' is lite [*leaf* 35, *back*]
So cruel on þe hunt/ as is arcite 2628
For Ielous hert' vpon þis Palomon
Ne in Belmary þer is no fel lyoun
That' hunted is or for hunger wood
Ne of' his prey desireþ so þe blood 2632
As Palomon to sle his foo arcite
This Ielous strokes on here helmes byte
Out' renneþ blood on boþe here sides reede
Som tyme an ende *þer* is on eu*er*y dede 2636
For er þe sonne vnto þe reste went
The strang' kyng' Emetreus gan hent'
This Palomon as he faught' wiþ arcite
And his swerd in his fleissch he did byte 2640
And by þe force of' .xx.ti he is take
Vnȝolden and I-drawe vnto þe stake

And in þe Rescous of þis Palomon
The stronge kyng · ligurgius is born a do*un* 2644
The kyng Emetreus for al his strengþe
Is born out of his sadel his swerdes lengþe
So hit him palamon er he were take
But al for nought he was brought to þe stake / 2648
his hardy herte might him helpe nouȝt
He most abyde whan þat he was caught
By force and eek by composicio*un*
who sorweþ now but Palomo*un* 2652
That moot no more gon agayn to fight
And whan þat Theseus had seen þat sight
he cryed hoo / nomore for it is doon
Ne noon schal lenger vnto his felaw goon 2656
I wol be trewe Iuge and nouȝt p*ar*tye
Arcyte of Thebes schal haue Emelye
That haþ by his fortune hire I-wonne
Anoon þer is noyse bygonne 2660
For ioye of þis so lowde and heye w*ith* alle
It semed þat þe listes wolde falle
what can now fayre Ven*us* doon aboue
what seiþ sche now what doþ þis queen of loue / 2664
But wepeþ so for wantyng of hir wille [*leaf* 36]
Til þat hire teeres in þe lystes fille
Sche sayde I am aschamed douteles
Satournus seyde douȝt*er* hold þy pees 2668
Mars haþ his wille his knight haþ his boone
And by myn heed þou schalt be esed soone
The trompes wiþ þe lowde mynstralcy
The herawdes þat ful lowde ȝolle and cry 2672
Been in here ioye / for daun arcyte
But herkneþ me and stynteþ but a lite
which a miracle bifel anoon
This arcyte fersly haþ don his helm a do*un* 2676
And on his courser for to schewe his face
he priked endlange in þe large place

lokyng' vpward vpon his Emelye
And sche agayn him cast a frendly yȝe 2680
For wo*m*men as for to speke in comune
þay folwe alle þe fauour of' fortune
And was all*e* his cheer and in his hert
Out' of' þe ground a fyr infernal stert' 2684
From Pluto send at' þe request' of' Saturne
For which his hors for feere gan to turne
And leep a syde and foundred as he leep
And or þat' arcyte may take keep 2688
he pight' him on þe pomel of' þe heed
That' in þat' place he lay as he were deed
his brest' tobroken with his sadil bowe
As blak' he lay as eny col or crowe 2692
So was þe blood y-ronne in his face
Anon he was y-born out of' þe place
with herte sore to Theseus paleys
Tho was he coruen out of' his harneys 2696
And in a bed y-brought' ful fair and blyue
For ȝit he was in memory and on lyue
And alway cryeng' after Emelye
Duk' Theseus and al his companye 2700
Is comen hom to Athenes his Cite
with all*e* blys and gret' solempnite
Al be it þat' þis auenture was falle [*leaf* 36, *back*]
he nolde nought' discomfort' hem alle / 2704
Men seyde eek' þat' arcita schuld nought dye
he schal be helyd of' his maladye
And of' ano*per* þing þey were as fayn
That' of' hem all*e* þer was noon y-slayn 2708
Al were þey sore hurt' and namely oon
That' wiþ a spere was þirled his brest' boon)
To oþer woundes and to broken armes
Some hadde salue and some hadde charmes 2712
Fermacyes of' herbes and eek' saue
They dronken for þey wolde here lyues haue

For which þis noble duk' as he wel can
Comforteþ and hono*ure*þ euery man 2716
And made reuel al þe lange night'
vnto the strau*n*ge lordes as it was right'
Ne þer was holden to discomfytyng'
But' as a Iustes or as a turmentyng' 2720
For soþly þer was no discomfiture
For fallyng' is but' an aduenture
Ne to be lad wiþ fors vnto þe stake
Vnȝolden and wiþ twenty knightes take 2724
A p*er*son allone wiþouten moo
And rent' forþ by arme foot' and too
And eek' his steede dryuen forþ wiþ staues
wiþ foote men boþe ȝemen and knaues 2728
It' was aretted him no vylonye
Ne no man*er* man held it' no cowardye
FOr which Theseus lowd anon leet crie
To stynten al rancour and al enuye 2732
The gree as wel on o syde as on oþer
And euery side lik' as oþeres broþer
And ȝaf' hem ȝiftes aft*er* here degre
And fully heeld a feste dayes þre 2736
And conueyed þe knightes worþily
Out' of' his toun a iournee largely
And hom went' eu*er*y man þe righte way
Ther was no more but' far wel haue good day 2740
Of' þis batayl I wol no more endite [*leaf* 37]
But' speke of' Palomon and of' arcyte
Swelleþ þe brest' of' Arcyte and þe sore
Encresceþ at his herte more and more 2744
The cloþred blood for eny lechecraft
Corrumpith and in his bouk' l-laft'
That' noþ*er* veyne blood ne ventusyng
Ne drynk' of' herbes may ben his helpyng' 2748
Tne vertu expulsik' or animal
For þilke vertu cleped natural

Ne may þe venym voyde ne expelle
The pypes of' his lounges gan to swelle 2752
And euery lacerte in his brest' adoun
Is schent' with venym and corrupcioun
Him gayneþ noþer for to get' his lyf'
Vomyt' vp-ward ne dounward laxatif' / 2756
Al is to-broken þilke regioun
Nature haþ now no dominacioun
And certeynly wher nature wil not' wirche
Far wel phisik' go bere þe man to chirche 2760
This al and som þat' arcyte moste dye
For which he sendeþ after Emelye
And Palomon þat' was his cosyn deere
Thanne seyd he þus as ȝe schul after heere 2764
Naught' may þe woful spirit/ in myn herte
Declare a poynt' of' my sorwes smerte
To ȝou my lady þat' I loue most'
But' I byquethe þe seruice of' my gost 2768
To ȝou abouen euery creature
Syn þat' my lyf' may no lenger dure
Allas þe woo allas þe peynes stronge
That' I for ȝou haue suffred and so longe 2772
Allas þe deþ allas myn Emelye
Allas departyng' of' our companye
Allas myn hertes queen allas my wyf'
Myn hertes lady ender of' my lyf' 2776
what' is þis world what' asken men to haue
Now wiþ his loue now in his colde graue
Allone wiþouten eny companye [leaf 37, back]
Far wel my swete far wel myn Emelye 2780
And softe take me in ȝour armes tweye
For loue of' god and herkneþ what' I seye
I haue heer with my cosyn Palomon
had stryf' and rancour many a day I-gon 2784
For loue of ȝow and eek' for Ielousie /
And Iupiter so wis my sowle gye

To speken of' a *ser*uaunt p*ro*prely
with alle circumsta*un*ces trewely 2788
That' is to seyn trouþe hono*ur* and knighthede
wysdom humblesse astaat'. and by kynrede
Fredam and al þat longeþ to þat art
So Iupit*er* haue of' my soule part' 2792
As in þis world right' now ne know I non
So worthy to be loued as Palomon
That' serueth ȝou and wol do al his lyf'
And if' þat' ȝe schul euer be a wyf' 2796
Forȝet not' Palomon þat' gentil man
And with þat' word his speche faile gan
For fro his herte vp to his brest' was come
The cold of' deþ þat' him had ouercome 2800
And ȝet' more ouer in his armes twoo
þe vital strengþ is lost' and al a-goo
Only the intellect wiþouten more
That' dwelled in his herte sik' and sore 2804
Gan fayle whan þe herte felte deth
Duskyng' his eyȝen two and fayled breth
But' on his lady ȝit he cast' his ye
his laste word was mercy Emelye / 2808
His spiryt' chaunged was and wente þer
As I cam neuer I can nat' tellen wher
Therefore I stynte I nam no dyuynistre /
Of' soules fynde I not' in þis registre 2812
Ne me list' nat' thopynyo*un*s to telle
Of' he*m* þough þat þei wyten wher þey dwelle
Arcyte is cold ther mars his soule gye
Now wol I speke forþ of' Emelye / 2816
Shright' Emely and howled Palomon [*leaf* 38]
And Theseus his sustir took' anon
Swownyng' and bar hir fro þe corps a way
what' helpeþ it' to tarye forþ þe day 2820
To telle how þat' sche weep boþe eue & morwe
For in swich caas wo*m*men can haue such sorwe

whan þat here housbonds ben from hem ago
That' for þe more p*ar*t þey sorwen so 2824
Or elles fallen in such maladye
That' atte laste certeynly þey dye
Infynyt' been þe sorwes and þe teeres
Of' olde folk' þat' ben of' tendre ȝeeres 2828
So gret' a wepyng' was þer noon certayn
whan Ector was I-brought al freissh I-slayn
As þat' *þer* was for deþ of' þis Theban
For sorwe of' him þer weepeþ boþe child and man 2832
At' troye allas þe pite þat' was þere
Cracchyng' of' cheekes rendyng' eek' of' here
why woldist / þou be deed þis wo*m*men crye
And haddest' gold ynowȝ and Emelye 2836
No man mighte / glade Theseus /
Sauyng' his olde fader Egeus /
That' knew þis worldes transmutacio*un*
As he hadde seen it torne vp and do*un* 2840
Ioye aft*er* woo and woo aftir gladnesse
And schewed him ensample and likenesse
Right' as þer deyde neuer man q*uo*d he
That' he ne lyued in erþe in som degree 2844
ȝit' þer ne lyuede neuer man he seyde
In al þis world þat' som tyme he ne deyde
This world nys but' a þurghfare ful of' woo
And we ben pilgryms passyng' to and froo 2848
Deþ is an ende of' euery worldly sore
And ouer al þis ȝit' seide he mochil more
To þis effect // ful wysly to enhorte
The peple þat' schulde him recomforte 2852
Duk' Theseus with al his busy cure
Cast' busyly wher þat þe sepulture
Of' good arcyte may best' y-maked be [*leaf* 38, *back*]
And eek' most' honurable in his degre 2856
And atte last' he took' conclusio*un*
That' ther as first' Arcite and Palomon

hadden for loue þe batail hem bytwene
That' in the selue groue soote and greene 2860
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires
His compleynt' and for loue his hoote fyres
he wolde make a fyr in which thoffice
Funeral he might' al accomplice 2864
And leet' comaunde anon to hakke and hewe /
The Okes olde and lay hem on a rewe
In culpo*u*ns wel arrayed for to brenne
his officers wiþ swifte foot' þey renne 2868
And ryde anon at' his comaundeme*n*t
And after þis Theseus hath I-sent'
After a beer and it' al ouer spradde
wiþ cloþ of' golde þe richest' þat' he hadde 2872
And of' þe same sute he clad arcyte
vpon his hondes were his gloues white
Eke on his heed a croune of' laurer grene /
And in his hond a swerd ful bright' and kene 2876
He leyde him bare þe visage on þe beere
Ther wiþ he weep þat' pite was to heere
And for þe poeple schulde see him alle /
whan it was day he brought' he*m* to þe halle 2880
That' roreth of' þe cry and of' þe soun
Tho cam þis woful Theban Palomo*u*n
wiþ flotery berd and ruggy asshy heeres
In cloþis blak' y-dropped al wiþ teeres 2884
And passyng' oþer of' wepyng' Emelye
The rewfullest' of' al þe companye
In as moche as þe se*r*uice schulde be
The more nobul and riche in his degre 2888
Duk' Theseus leet' forth þre steedes bryng'
That' trapped were in steel al gliteryng'
And cou*er*ed wiþ armes of' dan arcyte
Vpon þe steedes that' weren grete & white 2892
Ther seeten folk' / of' which oon bar his scheeld [*leaf* 39]
Ano*þer* his spere vp in his hondes heeld

The þridde bar with him his bowe turkeys
Of brend gold was þe caas and eek þe herneys 2896
And riden forth a paas with sorwful chere
Toward þe groue as ȝe schul after heere
The noblest of þe grekes þat þer were
vpon here schuldres carieden þe beere 2900
with slak paas and eyhen reed and wete
Thurgh-out þe cite by þe maister streete
That sprad was al with blak and wonder hye
Right of þe same is al þe stret I-wrye 2904
vpon þe right hond went olde Egeus
And on þat oþer syde duk Theseus
with vessels in here hand with gold wel fyn
As ful of hony mylk and blood and wyn 2908
Eke Palomon with a gret companye
And after þat com woful Emelye
with fyr in hond as was þat tyme þe gyse /
To do þoffice of funeral seruise 2912
Heyȝ labour and ful gret apparailyng
was at þe seruice and at þe fyr makyng
That with his grene top þe heuen raughte
And twenty fadme of brede tharme straughte / 2916
This is to seyn þe boowes were so brode
Of stree first was þer leyd ful many a loode
but how þe fyr was makyd vpon highte
Ne eek þe names how þe trees highte 2920
As Ook · fyr · birch · asp · aldir · holm · popler ·
wilw. elm plane. assch. box. chesteyn lynde laurer.
Mapul. thorn · beech · hasil · ew · wyppyltre
how þey weren felde schal nouȝt be told for me 2924
Ne how þe goddes ronnen vp and doun
Disheryt of here habitacioun
In which þey whilom woned in rest/ and pees
Nymphes. Faunes and Amadryes 2928
Ne how þe beestes and þe briddes alle
Fledden for feere / whan þe woode was falle /

Ne how þe ground agast' was of' þe light' [*leaf* 39, *back*]
That' was nought' wont' to see no sonne bright' 2932
Ne how þe fyr was couchid first' wiþ stree
And þanne with drye stykkes clouen in three
And þanne wiþ grene woode and spicerie
And þanne wiþ cloth of' gold and wiþ perrye 2936
And gerlandes hangyng' with ful many a flour
The myrre thensens wiþ also gret' odour
Ne how arcyte lay among' al þis
Ne what' richesse / aboute his body is 2940
Ne how þat' Emely as was þe gyse
Putt' in þe fyr of' funeral seruise
Ne how she swowned whan sche made þe fyre
Ne what' sche spak' ne what' was hire desire 2944
Ne what' iewels men in þe fyr þo cast'
whan þat' þe fyr was gret' and brente fast'
And how sum caste hir scheeld and summe her spere
And of' here vestiment3 which þat' þey were 2948
And cuppes ful of' wyn and mylk' and blood
Vnto þe fyr þat' brent' as it were wood
Ne how þe gregoys wiþ an huge route
Thre tymes ryden al þe fyr aboute 2952
vpon þe lefte hond with an heih schoutyng'
And þries wiþ here speres clateryng'
And þries how þe ladyes gan to crye
Ne how þat' lad was homeward Emelye 2956
Ne how arcyte is brent' to aschen colde /
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*
Al thilke night' ne how þe grekes pleye /
The wake pleyes kepe I nat' to seye 2960
who wrastleþ best' naked wiþ oyle enoynt'
Ne who þat' bar him best' in no disoynt
I wol not' telle eek' how þat' þey ben goon
Hom til athenes whan þe pley is doon 2964
But' schortly to þe poynt' now wol I wende
And maken of' my longe tale an ende

By proces and by lengþe of' certeyn ȝeres
Al styntyd is þe mornyng' and þe teeres 2968
Of' alle grekys by oon general assent
Than semed me ther was a parlement' [leaf 40]
At' athenes on a certeyn poynt / and cas
Among' þe whiche poyntes spoken was 2972
To han wiþ certeyn contrees alliaunce /
And haue fully of' Thebans obeissance
For which þis noble Theseus anon
let' senden after gentil Palomon 2976
Vnwist' of' him what' was þe cause and why
But' in his blake cloþes sorwfully
he cam at' his comaundement in hye
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye 2980
whan þey were sette and hussht' was al þe place
And Theseus abyden hadde a space
Or eny word cam fro his wyse brest'
His eyen set' he þer as was his lest 2984
And wiþ a sad visage he syked stille
And after þat' right' þus he seide his wille
The firste moeuere of' þe cause aboue
whan he first made þe fayre cheyne of' loue 2988
Gret was theffect / and heigh was his entente /
wel wist' he why and what þerof' he mente
For which þat' faire cheyne of' loue he bond
The fyr þe watir eyr and eek þe lond 2992
In certeyn boundes þat' þey may not' flee
That' same prynce and moeuere eek quod he /
haþ stabled in þis wrecched world a doun
Certeyn dayes and duracioun 2996
To alle þat' er engendrid in þis place
Ouer þe day þey may nat pace
Al mowe they ȝit wel here dayes abregge
Ther needeþ non auctorite tallegge 3000
For it' is preued by experience
But' þat' me lust' declare my sentence

Than may men wel by þis ordre discerne
That þilke moeuere stabul is and eterne 3004
wel many men knewe but' it be a fool
That' euery p*ar*tye dyryueþ from his hool
For nature haþ nat take his bygynnyng'
Of no p*ar*tye ne cantel of' a þing' [*leaf* 40, *back*] 3008
But' of' a þing' þat' p*ar*fyt' is and stable /
Descendyng' so til it' be corumpable
And þ*er*fore of' his wyse purueaunce /
He hath so wel biset' his ordenaunce 3012
That' spices of' þinges and p*ro*gressio*u*ns
Schullen endure by successio*u*ns
And nat et*er*ne be wiþoute lye
This maistow vnderstand and se at' ye 3016
LO þe Ook' þat' haþ so long' norisschyng'
Fro tyme þat' it gy*n*neþ first' to spring'
And as so long' a lyf' as we may see
ȝet' atte laste wasted is þe tree 3020
COnsidereþ eek' how þat' þe harde stoon
vnder oure foot' / on which we trede and goon
ȝit' wasteth it' as it' liþ by þe weye
The brode Ryuer som tyme wexeþ dreye 3024
The grete townes see we wane and wende
Than may I see þat al þing' haþ an ende
OF man and wo*m*man se we wel also /
That' wendeþ in oon of þis t*er*mes two 3028
That' is to seyn / in ȝouþe or elles in age
he moot' ben deed / þe kyng' as schal a page /
Sum in his bed som in þe deepe see
Som in þe large feel as men may se/ 3032
Ther helpeþ naught' al goþ þilke weye
Thanne may I see wel þ*at*' al þ*in*g' schal deye
what' makeþ þis but Iubit*er* þe kyng'
The which is prynce and cause of' all*e* thing' 3036
Conuertyng' al vnto his p*ro*pre wille
From which he is dereyned soþ to telle /

And here agayn no creature of lyue
Of no degre auayleþ for to stryue 3040
Than is it wisdom as þenkeþ me
To maken vertu of necessite
And take it wel þat we may nat eschewe
And namely þat þat to vs alle is dewe / 3044
And who-so grucheþ aught he doþ folye
And rebel is to him þat al may gye [leaf 41]
And certeynly a man haþ most honour
To deyen in his excellence and flour 3048
whan he is siker of his goode name
Than haþ he doon his freend ne him no schame
And gladder ought his freend ben of his deþ
whan with honour is ȝolden vp þe breth 3052
Thanne whan his name appeled is for age
For al forgeten is his vasselage
Thanne is it best as for a worþi fame
To dye whan a man is best of name 3056
The contrary of al this is wilfulnesse
why grucchen we why haue we heuynesse /
That good arcyte of chyualry þe flour
Departed is with worschip and honour 3060
Out of þis foule prisoun of þis lyf
why grucheþ heer his cosyn and his wyf
Of his wel fare þat louen him so wel
Can he hem thank / nay / god woot neuer a del 3064
That boþe his soule and eek hem self offende
And ȝet þey may here lustes nat amende
That may I conclude of þis longe serye
But aftir wo I rede vs to be merye 3068
And þanke Iubiter al of his grace
And or þat we departe fro þis place /
I rede þat we make of sorwes two
O parfyt ioye lastyng euer mo 3072
And lokeþ now wher most sorwe is her-Inne /
Ther wol we first amenden and bygynne /

Sustyr q*uo*d he þis is my ful assent
wiþ al thauys heer of my p*ar*lement 3076
That gentil Palomon ȝour owne knight
That serueþ ȝow with herte wil and might
And euer haþ doon syn fyrst tyme ȝe him knewe
That ȝe schul of ȝour grace vpon him rewe 3080
And take him for ȝour housbond and for lord
Lene me ȝoure hand for þis is oure acord
let see now of ȝour wo*m*manly pite
he is a kynges broþir sone pardee [*leaf* 41, *back*] 3084
And þough he were a pore bachiller
Syn he haþ serued ȝou so many a ȝeer
And had for ȝou so gret aduersite
hit moste be considered trusteþ me 3088
For gentil mercy aughte passe right
Than seyde he þus to Palomon ful right
I trowe þer needeþ litel sermonyng
To make ȝou assente to þis þing 3092
Com neer and tak ȝour lady by þe hond
Bitwix hem was I-maad anon þe bond
That hightе matrimoyn or mariage
By alle þe counseil and þe baronage 3096
And thus with blys and eek wiþ melodye
Haþ Palomon I-wedded Emelye
And god þat al þis wyde world haþ wrought
Send him his loue þat haþ it deere I-bought 3100
For now is Palomon in al his wele
Lyuynge in blisse richesse and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tendirly
And he hir serueþ also gentilly 3104
That neuer wordes hem bitweene
Of gelousy ne of non oþir teene /
Thus endeþ Palomon and Emelye
And god saue al þis fayre companye / Ame*n*. 3108
HEre endeþ þe knightes tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And þus bygy*n*neþ þe p*r*ologe of' þe myllere

WHan þat' þe knigh̄t' had þus his tale I-told
In al þe route nas þer ȝong' ne old
That' he ne seyde it was a noble story
And worþi to be drawen in memory 3112
And namely þe gentils euerich oon
Our*e* host' þo low̄n and swoor so moot' I goon
This goþ right' wel vnbokeled is þe male /
Let' se now who schal telle anoþ*er* tale 3116
For trewely þis game is wel bygonne /
Now telleþ now sir monk' if' þat ȝe konne
Som what' to quyte wiþ þe knightes tale /
The Myller þat' for drunken was al pale 3120
So þat' vnnethe vpon his hors he sat [*leaf* 42]
he wold auale nowþ*er* hood ne hat
Ne abyde no man for his curtesye
But' in Pilates voys he gan to crye 3124
And swor by armes and by blood and bones
I can a noble tale for þe noones
with which I wol now quyte þe knightes tale
Oure hoost' saugh̄ wel how dronke he was of' ale 3128
And seyde Robyn abyde my leue broþ*er*
Som bettre man schal telle vs first' anoþ*er*
Abyd and let' vs worken þriftyly
By goddes soule quod he þat' wol nat' I 3132
For I wol speke or elles go my way
Oure host' answed / tel on a deuel way
Thou art' a fool þy witt' is ouercome /
¶ Now herkneþ q*uo*d þis myller al and some 3136
But' first' I make a p*ro*testacio*u*n
That' I am dronke I knowe wel by my soun
And þerfore if' þat' I mys speke or seye
wyte it' þe ale of' Southwerk' I ȝou preye 3140

For I wol telle a legende and a lyf[t]
Bothe of[t] a Carpent*er* and of[t] his wyf[t]
how þat[t] þe clerk[t] haþ set[t] þe wriȝtes cappe /
The reue answered and seyde stynt þi clappe / 3144
let[t] be þy lewed drunken harlottrye
It[t] is a synne and eek[t] a greet[t] folye
To apeyren eny man or him defame
And eek[t] to brynge wyues in ylle name 3148
Thou mayst[t] ynowȝ of[t] oþer þinges seyn
This dronken Miller spak[t] ful sone a-geyn
And seyde leeue brother Osewold
who hath no wyf[t] he is no Cokewold 3152
But[t] I seye not[t] þerfore þat[t] þou art[t] oon
Ther been ful goode wyues many oon
And euer a þousand goode agayns oon badde
That[t] knowest[t] þou wel þy self[t] but[t] if[t] þou madde 3156
why art[t] þou angry with my tale now /
I haue a wyf[t] p*ar* de as wel as thow
ȝit nolde I for the oxen in my plough [*leaf* 42, *back*]
Take vpon me more þan ynough 3160
Though þat[t] þou deme þiself[t] þat[t] þou be oon
I wol bileeue wel þat[t] I am [1]oon [[1] *a later* n *prefixt*]
An housbond schal not[t] be inquisityf[t]
Of[t] goddes pryuete ne of[t] his wyf[t] 3164
So þat[t] he fynde goddes foysoun þere
Of[t] þe remena*un*t[t] neede þ nought[t] enquere /
what[t] schuld I seye but[t] þat þis proud Millere
he nolde his wordes for no man forbere 3168
But[t] tolde his cherlisch tale in his manere
Me aþinkeþ þat[t] I schal reherce it heere
And þ*er*for euery gentil wight[t] I preye.
For goddes loue as deme nat þat I seye 3172
Of[t] yuel entent but[t] for I moot reherse
here wordes alle ¶ al be þey better or werse
Or elles falsen som of[t] my mateere
And þ*er*for who-so list[t] it nat[t] to heere 3176

Turne ouer þe leef' and cheese anoþer tale
For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret' and smale
Of' storial þing' þat' toucheþ gentilesse
And eek' more ryalte and holynesse 3180
Blameþ nat me If' þat' ȝe cheese amys
The Miller is a cherl ȝe know wel þis
So was þe reeue and oþir many mo
And harlotry þey tolden boþe two 3184
Auyseþ ȝou and put' me out / of' blame
And men schulde nat make ernest' of' game
HEre endeþ þe prologe of' þe Miller

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And bygy*n*neth his tale

Whilom þer was dwellyng' at' Oxenford
A riche gnof' that' gestes heeld to boorde
And of' his craft' he was a Carpenter 3189
wiþ him þer was dwellyng' a pore scoler
had lerned art' but' al his fantasye
was torned for to lerne astrologye 3192
An cowde a certeyn of' conclusio*u*ns
To deme by interrogacio*u*ns
If' þat men axed him in certeyn houres [1 *leaf* 43]
[1] whan þat men schuld han drought' or ellys schoures 3196
Or if' men axed him what schulde bifalle
Of' euery þing I may nouȝt' reken hem alle
This clerk' was cleped heende Nicholas
Of' derne loue he cowde and of' solas 3200
And þer wiþ he was sleigh and ful priue
And lik' amayden meke for to se
A chambir had he in his hostillerye
Alone wiþouten eny compaignye 3204
Ful fetisly I-dig̃t' with herbes soote /
And he himself' as swete as is þe roote
Of' lokorys or eny Cetewale
his almagest' and bookes gret and smale 3208
his astrylabe longyng' for his art
his augrym stoones leyen faire a part'
On schelues couched at' his beddes heed
his presse I-couered wiþ a faldyng' reed 3212
And al aboue þer lay a gay Sawtrye
On which he made a nightes melodye
So swetely þat' al þe chambur rang'
And angelus ad v*ir*ginem he sang' 3216
And after þat he sang' þe kynges note
Ful often blissed was his mery þrote

And þus þis sweete clerk' his tyme spente
After his frendes fyndyng' and his rente 3220
This carpenter had weddid newe a wyf'
which þat' he loved more þan his lyf'
Of' eyȝteteene ȝeer sche was of' age
Gelous he was and heeld hir narwe in cage 3224
For sche was wilde & ȝong' and he was old
And demed himself' be lik' a Cokewold
he knew nat Cato*u*n for his wit' was rude
That' bad man schulde wedde his similitude 3228
Men schulde wedde aftir here astaat'
For eelde and ȝouþe ben often at' debaat'
But' syn þat' he was brouȝt' in to þe snare
He moste endure as oþere doon his care 3232
Fair was þe ȝonge wyf' and þer wiþ al
As eny wesil hir body gent and smal [*leaf* 43, *back*]
A seynt' sche wered barred al of' silk'
A barmcloþ eek' as whit' as morne mylk' 3236
vpon hir lendes ful of' many a gore
whit' was hir smok' and browdid albyfore
And eek' byhynde on hir coler aboute
Of' coleblak' silk' wiþinne and eek' wiþoute 3240
The tapes of' hir white voluper
weren of' þe same sute of hire coler
hir filet' brood of' silk' y-set ful heye
And certeynly sche hadd a licorous eyȝe 3244
Ful smal y-pulled weren hir browes two /
And þo were bent as blak' as a slo
Sche was wel more blisful on to see
Than is þe newe p*er*ionette tree 3248
And softer þan þe wol is of' a weþir
And by hir gurdil hyng a purs of' leþir
Tassid wiþ silk' and perled wiþ lato*u*n
In al þis world to seken vp and doun 3252
Ther nys no man so wys þat couþe þenche /
So gay a popillot' or such a wenche /

For brighter was þe smylyng' of' hir hewe
Than in þe tour þe noble I-forged newe 3256
But' of' hir song' it' was as lowde and ȝerne
As eny swalwe chiteryng' on a berne
Ther to sche cowde skippe and make game
As eny kyde or calf' folowyng' his dame 3260
hir mouth was sweete as bragat' is or meth
Or hoord of' apples layd in hay or heth
wynsyng' sche was as is a Ioly colt'
long' as a mast' / and vpright' as a bolt / 3264
A broch sche bar vpon hir loue coleer
As brod as is þe bos of' a bocleer
hir schos were laced / on hir legges heyȝe
Sche was a primerole[1] a pigges neyȝe 3268
For eny lord haue liggyng' in his bedde [[1] a later & is put in here]
Or ȝet' for eny good ȝeman to wedde
Now sir and eft' sir / so bifel þe cas
That' on a day þis heende Nicholas [leaf 44] 3272
Fil wiþ þis ȝonge wyf' to rage and pleye
whil þat' hir housbond was at' Oseneye
As clerkes ben ful sotil and ful queynte
And pryuely he caught hir by þe queynte 3276
And seyde I-wis but if' I haue my wille
For derne loue of' þe lemman I spille /
And heeld hir harde by þe haunche boones
And seyde lemman loue me al at' ones 3280
Or I wol dye as wisly god me saue
And sche sprang' out' / as doþ a colt/ in traue
And wiþ hir heed sche wried fast' awey
I seyde I wol nat' kisse þe by my fey 3284
why let' be q*uo*d sche / lat' be þou nicholas /
Or I wol crye out' harrow and allas
Do wey ȝour handes for ȝour curtesye
This nicholas gan mercy for to crye 3288
And spak' so faire and p*ro*fred him so faste/
That' sche hir loue him g*ra*unted atte laste /

And swor hir oth / by seynt thomas of kent
That sche wol be at his comaundement 3292
whan þat sche may hir leysir wel aspye
Myn housbond is so ful of Ielousie /
That but ȝe wayten wel and be pryue
I woot right wel I am but deed quod sche 3296
ȝe mosten be ful derne as in þis caas
Ther of ne care þe nought quod Nicholas
A clerk haþ litherly byset his while
But if he cowde a carpenter bygyle 3300
And þus þey ben acorded and I-sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue told biforn
Whan Nicholas had doon þus euery del
And thakked hire aboute þe lendys wel 3304
he kist hir sweet / and takeþ his sawtrye
And pleyeþ fast and makeþ melodye
Than fyl it þus / þat to þe parisch chirche /
Cristes owen werkes for to wirche 3308
This goode wyf / went on an haly day
Hir forheed schon as bright as eny day [*leaf* 44, *back*]
So was it waisschen whan sche leet hir werk
Now þer was of þat chirche a parisch clerk 3312
The which þat was I-cleped Absolon
Crulle was his heer and as þe gold it schon
And strowted as a fan right large and brood
Ful streyt and euene lay his ioly schood 3316
his rode was reed his eyȝen gray as goos
with Powles wyndowes coruen in his schoos
In his hoses reed he went fetusly
I-clad he was ful smal and propurly 3320
Al in a kirtel of a fyn wachet
Schapen with goores in þe newe get
And *þer* vpon he had a gay surplys
As whyt as is þe blosme vpon þe rys 3324
A mery child he was so god me saue
wel couþe he lete blood and clippe and schaue

And make a chartre of lond and acquitaunce
In twenty maners he coude skip and daunce 3328
After þe scole of Oxenforde þo
And wiþ his legges casten to and fro
And pleyen songes on a smal rubible
Therto he sang som tyme a lowde quynyble 3332
And as wel coude he pleye on a giterne /
In al þe toun nas brewhous ne tauerne
That he ne visited with his solas
Ther as any gaylard tapster was 3336
Bot soþ to say he was som del squaymous
Of fartyng / and of speche daungerous
This absolon þat ioly was and gay
Goþ wiþ a senser on þe haly day 3340
Sensyng þe wyues of þe parisch fast
And many a louely look on hem he cast
And namely on þis Carpenteres wyf
To loke on hire him þought a mery lyf 3344
Sche was so propre sweete and licorous
I dar wel sayn if sche had ben a mous
And he a cat he wold hir hent anoon
This parisch clerk this Ioly Absolon [leaf 45] 3348
Haþ in his herte such a loue longyng
That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng /
For curtesy he seyde he wolde noon
The moone at night ful cleer and brighte schoon 3352
And absolon his giterne haþ I-take
For paramours he seyde he wold awake /
And for he goþ iolyf and amerous /
Til he cam to þe Carpenteres hous 3356
A litel after þe cok had y-crowe /
And dressed him vp by a schot wyndowe /
That was vnder þe Carpenteres wal
he syngeþ in his voys gentil and smal 3360
Now deere lady if þi wille be
I praye ȝow þat ȝe wol rewe on me

Ful wel acordyng' to his gyternyng'
This carpenter awook' and herde him syng' 3364
And spak' vnto his wyf' and sayde anoon
what' alisoun herestow not absolon
That' chaunteþ þus vnder oure boure smal
And sche answerd hir housbond þer wiþ al 3368
ȝis God woot' Iohn I heere it' euery del
This passeþ forth what' wil ȝe bet' þan wel
Fro day to day þis Ioly Absolon
So woweþ hire þat him is wo bigon 3372
he wakeþ al þe nigh't and al þe day
To kembe his lokkes brode and made him gay
he wowith hire by mene and by brocage
And swor he wolde ben hir owne page / 3376
he syngeþ crowyng' as a nightyngale
And sent' hire pyment' meth and spiced ale /
And wafres pypyng' hoot' out' of' þe gleede
For þat' sche was of' toune he profred meede 3380
For som folk' wol be wonne for richesse
And som for strokes som for gentillesse
Som tyme to schewe his lightnes and maistrye
he pleyeth herodȝ on a scaffold hye 3384
But' what' avayleþ him as in þis caas /
Sche loueþ so þis heende Nicholas [leaf 45, back]
That' absolon may blowe þe bukkes horn
he ne had for al his labour but' a skorn 3388
And þus sche makeþ absolon hir ape
And al his ernest' torneþ to a Iape
Ful soþ is þis prouerbe it' is no lye
Men seyn right' þus alway þe ney slye 3392
Makeþ þe ferre leef' to be loþ
For þough þat absolon be wood or wroth
By cause þat' he fer was from here sight'
This Nicholas haþ stonden in his light 3396
Now bere þe wel þou heende Nicholas
For absolon may wayle and synge allas

¶ And so bifeH it on a Satyrday
This Carpenter was gon to Osenay 3400
And heende Nicholas and alisoun
Acordid ben to þis conclusioun
That' Nicholas schal schapen hem a wyle
This sely Ielous housbond to begyle / 3404
And if' so were þis game wente aright
Sche schulde slepe in his arm al night
For þis was hire desir and his also
And right anoon wiþouten wordes mo 3408
This Nicholas no lenger wold he tarye
But' doþ ful softe in to his Chambur carye
Boþe mete and drynke for a day or tweye
And to hir housbond bad hir for to seye 3412
If' þat' he axed after Nicholas
Sche schulde seye sche wiste nat' wher he was
Of' al þat' day sche saw him nat' with eye
Sche trowed he were falle in som maladye 3416
For no cry þat' hir mayden cowde him calle
he nolde answere for nought' þat may bifalle
This passeþ forþ al þat' ilke satyrday
Tha Nicholas in his chambre lay 3420
And eet' and drank' and dede what/ him leste
Til soneday þe sonne was gon to reste
This sely carpenter haþ gret meruaile [leaf 46]
Of' Nicholas or what þing' may him ayle 3424
And seyde I am a-drad by seynt' Thomas
It' stondeþ nat' aright' wiþ Nicholas
God schilde þat' he deyde sodeinly
This world is now ful tykel sikerly 3428
I saugh to-day a corps y-born to chirche
That' now on monday last' I saugh him wirche
Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anoon
Clepe at' his dore and knokke wiþ a stoon 3432
Loke how it' is and telle me boldely
This knaue goþ him vp ful sturdily

And at' þe chambir dore whil he stood
he cryed and knokked as þat' he were wood 3436
what' how what' do ȝe mayster nicholay
how may ȝe slepen al þis longe day
But' al for nought' he herde nat o word
An hole he fond right' lowe vpon a boord 3440
Ther as þe cat' was wont' in for to creepe /
And at' þat' hole he loked in ful deepe /
And atte laste he hadde of' him a sight
This nicholas sat' euer gapyng' vpright' 3444
As he had loked on þe newe moone
Adoun he goþ and tolde his mayster soone
In what' aray he sawh þis ilke man
This carpenter to blessen him bygan 3448
And seyde now help vs seynte Frideswyde
A man woot' litel what' him schal betyde
This man is falle with his astronomye
In som woodnesse or in som agonye 3452
I thought' ay wel how þat' it' schulde be
Men schulde nought' knowe of' goddes pryuyte
¶ ȝe blessed be alwey a lewed man
That' nat' but' oonly his bileeue can 3456
So ferde anoþer clerk' with astronomye /
he walked in the feeldes for to prye
vpon þe sterres what' þer schulde bifalle
Til he was in a marle pit' I-falle / 3460
he saugh nat' þat' but' ȝet' by seint' Thomas /
Me reweth sore for heende nicholas [leaf 46, back]
he schal be ratyd of' his studyyng
If' þat' I may by ihū heuen kyng' 3464
Gete me a staf' þat' I may vnder spore
whil þat' þou Robyn heuest' vp þe dore
he schal out' of' his studyyng' as I gesse
And to þe chambir dore he gan him dresse / 3468
his knaue was a strong' karl for þe noones
And by þe hasp he haf' it' vp at' oones

And in þe floor þe dore fil doun anoon
This nicholas sat' stille as eny stoon 3472
And euer he capyd vpward to þe eyr
This Carpent*er* wende he were in despeir
And hent' him by þe schuldres mightily
And schook' him harde and cryed spitously 3476
what' Nicholas what' how man loke a doun
A-wake and þynk' on cristes passio*un*
I crowche þe from Elues and from wightes
Ther-with þe night-spel seyde he anon rightes 3480
On þe foure halues of' þe hous aboute /
And of' þe þreisshfold of' þe dore wiþoute
lord Ihū crist and seynte bendight
Blesse þis hous from euery wikkede wight' 3484
for nyghtes verray þe white pater-noster
wher wonestow now, seynte petres soster
And atte laste heende Nicholas
Gan for to syke sore and seyde allas 3488
Schal al þe world be lost' eft' sones now
This Carpenter answerde what' seystow /
what' þenk' on god as we doon men þat swynke
This Nicholas answerde fette me drynke 3492
And after wol I speke in pryuyte
Of' certeyn þing' þat' toucheþ þe and me
I wol telle it non oþer man certayn
This Carpenter goþ forth and comþ agayn 3496
And brought' of' mighty ale a large quart/
whan ech of' hem y-dronken had his part
This Nicholas his dore gan to schitte
And dede þis carpent*er* doun by him sitte [*leaf* 47] 3500
And seide Ioh*a*n myn host' ful leue and deere
Thou schalt' vpon þy trouþe swere me heere /
That' to no wight' þou schalt' þis cou*n*sel wreye
For it is cristes counsel þat' I seye 3504
And if' þou telle it man þou art forlore
For þis vengaunce þou schalt' han þ*er*fore

That' if' þou wreye me þou schalt' be wood
Nay crist' forbede it' for his holy blood 3508
Quod þo þis sely man I am no labbe
Though I it' say I am nought' leef' to gabbe /
Say what' þou wolt' I schal it neuer telle /
To child ne wyf' by him þat' harwed helle 3512
Now Iohan quod nicholas I wol not' lye
I haue I-founde in myn astrologye
As I haue loked in þe moone bright'
That' now on monday next' at' quarter night' 3516
Schal falle a reyn and þat' so wilde and wood
That' half' so gret' was neuer Noes flood
This worlde he seyde more þan an hour
Schal ben I-dreynt' so hidous is þe schour 3520
Thus schal mankynde drenche and leese his lyf'
This Carpenter answered allas my wyf'
And shal she drenche allas myn alisoun
For sorwe of' þis he fel almost' adoun 3524
And seyde is þer no remedy in þis caas
whe ȝis for gode quod heende Nicholas
If' þou wolt' werken aftir lore and reed
Thou maist' nought' worke after þin owen heed 3528
For þus seiþ Salomon þat' was ful trewe
werke by counseil / and þou schalt' nat' rewe
And if' þou worken wolt' by good counsail
I vndertake wiþouten mast' and sail 3532
ȝet' schal I sauen hir and þe and me
hastow nat' herd / how saued was Noe
whan þat' our lord had warned him biforn
That' al þe world wiþ watir schulde be lorn 3536
ȝis quod þis Carpenter ful ȝore ago
hastow nought herd quod Nicholas also [leaf 47, back]
The sorwe of' Noe wiþ his felaschipe
That he hadde or he gat' his wyf' to schipe 3540
him hadde wel leuer I dar wel vndertake /
At' þilke tyme þan alle his weþeres blake

That' sche hadde a schip hir self' allone
And þerfore wostow what' is best' to doone / 3544
This axeþ hast' and of' an hasty þing'
Men may nought' preche or make taryyng'
Anon go gete vs fast' in to þis In
A knedyng' trowh or elles a kemelyn 3548
For ech of' vs but' loke þat' þey be large
In which þat' we may rowe as in a barge
And haue þer In vitaille suffisant'
But' for o day, fy on þe remenant' 3552
The wat*er* schal aslake and gon away
Aboute p*r*ime vppon þe nexte day
But' Robyn may not' wite of' þis þy knaue
Ne ek' þy mayde Gille I may not' saue 3556
Aske nought' why for þough þou aske me
I wol nat tellen goddes pryuete
Sufficeth þe but' if' þat þy witt/ madde
To haue as gret' a grace as noe hadde / 3560
Thy wyf' schal I wel sauen out' of' doute /
Go now þy wey and speed þe heer aboute
And whan þou hast' for hir and þe and me /
I-goten vs þis knedyng' tubbes þre 3564
Than schalt' þou hange hem in þe roof' ful hie
That no man of' oure purueaunce aspye
And whan þou þus hast' doon as I haue seyd
And hast' our vitaille faire in hem I-leyd 3568
And eek' an ax to smyte þe corde a-two
whan þat' þe water comeþ þat' we may goo
And breke an hole an hye vpon þe gable
In to þe gardynward ouer þe stable / 3572
That' we may frely passen forþ oure way
whan þat' þe grete schour is gon away
Than schaltow swymme as mery I vndertake
As doth þe white doke aftir hir drake [*leaf* 48] 3576
Than wol I clepe how alis*oun* how Ion.
[Beoth merye for the flood passeþ a-non] [*in a later hand*]

And þou wolt' seye heyl maister nicholay
Good morn I see þe wel for it is day 3580
And þan schul we be lordes al oure lyf'
Of' al þe world as noe and his wyf'
But' of' oo þing' I warne þe ful rig̃ht'
Be wel auysed of' þat' ilke nyght 3584
That' we ben entred in to schippes boord
That' not' of' vs ne speke not' a word
Ne clepe ne crye but' be in his preyere
For it is goddes owne heste deere 3588
Thy wyf' and þou most' hangen fer a-twynne
For þat' bitwixe ȝou schal be no synne
No more in lokyng' þan þer schal in dede /
This ordyna*un*ce is seyd, so god me speede / 3592
To morwe at' nig̃ht' whan men ben a slepe /
In to our knedyng' tubbes wol we crepe /
And sitte þer abydyng' goddes grace /
Go now þy way I haue no lenger space 3596
To make of' þis no lenger sermonyng'
Men seyn þus / send þe wyse and sey no þing'
Thou art' so wys it' needeth nat' þe teche
Go saue oure lyf' and þat' I þe byseche / 3600
This seely carpent*er* goþ forþ his way
Ful ofte he seyd allas and weylaway
And to his wyf' he told his pryuete
And sche was war and knew it' bet' þan he / 3604
what' al this wente cast' was for to seye /
But' naþeles sche ferd as sche schuld deye
And seyde allas go forth þy way anoon
help vs to skape or we be ded echon 3608
I am þy verray trewe wedded wyf'
Go deere spouse and help to saue oure lyf'
lo which a gret' þing' is affecciou*n*
A man may dye for ymaginacou*n* 3612
So deepe may impressiou*n* be take
This seely Carpenter bygynneth quake [*leaf* 48, *back*]

him þenkeþ verrayly þat' he may se
Noes flood come walkyng' as þe see / 3616
To drenchen alisoun his hony deere
he weepeþ wayleþ he maketh sory cheere
he sikeþ with ful many a sory swoughh
And goth and geteth him a knedyng' troughh 3620
And after þat' a tubbe and a kymelyn
And pryuely he sent' hem to his In
And heng' hem in þe roof' in pryuete
His owne hond þan made laddres þre 3624
To clymben by þe ronges and þe stalkes
vnto þe tubbes hangyng' in þe balkes
And hem vitayled boþe troughh and tubbe
with breed and cheese wiþ good ale in a Iubbe 3628
Suffisyng' right' ynough as for a day
But' or þat' he had maad al þis array
he sent' his knaue and eek' his wenche also
vpon his neede to londoun for to go 3632
And on þe monday whan it' drew to nyght
he schette his dore wiþouten candel light
And dressed al þis þing' as it' schuld be
And schortly vp þey clumben alle þre 3636
They seten stille wel a forlong' way
Now pater noster clum quod Nicholay
And Clum quod Ion and Clum . quod. Alisoun
This Carpenter seyd his deuocioun 3640
And stille he sitt' and byddeþ his prayere
Ay waytyng' on þe Reyn if' he it' heere
The deede sleep for verray busynesse
Fil on þis Carpenter right' as I gesse / 3644
Abowten courfew tyme or litel more
For trauail of' his goost' he groneþ sore
And eft' he routeþ for his heed myslay
Doun of' þe laddir stalkeþ Nicholay 3648
And alisoun ful softe a doun hir spedde
wiþouten wordes mo þey goon to bedde

Ther as þe Carpenter was wont to lye
Ther was þe Reuel and þe melodye [leaf 49] 3652
And þus lith alisoun and Nicholas
In busynesse of' myrþe and of' solas
Til þat þe belles of' laudes gan to rynge
And freres in þe Chauncel gan to synge 3656
This parissch clerk' þis amerous absolon
That is for loue so harde and woo bygon
vpon þe Monday was at' Osenay
with company him to desporte and play 3660
And axed vpon caas a cloysterer
Ful pryuely after þe carpenter
And he drough him a part' out' of' þe chirche
And sayde nay I say him nat here wirche 3664
Syn satirday I trow þat' he be went
For tymber þer our abbot' hath him sent/
For he is wont' for tymber for to goo
And dwellen at' þe graunge a day or tuo 3668
Or elles he is at' his hous certayn
wher þat' he be I can nat' soþly sayn
This absolon ful ioly was and light'
And thoughte now is tyme wake al night' 3672
For sikerly I sawh him nought' styryng'
Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spryng'
So mote I þryue I schal at Cokkes crowe
Ful pryuely go knokke at his wyndowe 3676
That' stant' ful lowe vpon his bowres wal
To alisoun þan wol I tellen al
My loue-longyng' for ȝet' I schal not' mysse
That' atte leste wey I schal hir kisse 3680
Som maner comfort' schal I haue par fay
My mouth haþ icched al þis longe day
That' is a signe of' kissyng' atte leste
Al nyght' I mette eek' I was at a feste 3684
Ther fore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye
And al þe night' þan wol I wake and pleye

whan þat' þe firste cok' haþ crowe anoon
vp ryst' þis Iolyf' louer absolon 3688
And him arrayeþ gay at' poynt' deuys
But' first' he cheweþ greyn and lycoris [*leaf 49, back*]
To smellen swete or he hadde kempt' his heere
vnder his tunge a trewe loue he beere / 3692
For þer by wende he to be gracious
he romeþ to þe carpenteres hous
And stille he stant' vnd þe schot' wyndowe /
vnto his brest' it' raught/ it' was so lowe / 3696
And softe he cowhiþ with a semy soun
what' do ȝe hony comb swete alisoun
My fayre bryd my swete Cynamome
Awake lemman myn and spekeþ tome 3700
wel litel þynke ȝe vpon my wo
That' for ȝoure loue I swelte þer I go
No wonder is if' þat' I swelte and swete /
I morne as doþ a lamb after þe tete 3704
I-wis le*m*man I haue such loue-longyng'
That' like a turtil trewe is my moornyng'
I may not' ete no more þan a mayde /
¶ Go fro þe wyndow Iakke fool sche sayde / 3708
As help me god it wol not' be com paine
I loue anoþ*er* and elles were I to blame
wel bet' þan þe by Ihū absolon
Go forþ þy wey or I wol cast' a stoon 3712
And let me slepe a twenty deuelway
Allas q*uo*d absolon and weylaway
That' trewe loue was euer so ylle bysett/
þanne kisseth me syn it may be no bett' 3716
For Iesus loue and for þe loue of' me
wilt' þou þan go þy wey þer with q*uo*d sche
ȝe certes lemman q*uo*d þis absolon
Than mak' þe redy q*uo*d sche I come anon 3720
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
This absolon doun sette him on his knees

And seide I am a lord at alle degrees 3724
For after þis I hope þer comeþ more
Lemman þy grace / and swete bryd þyn ore
The wyndow sche vndyd and þat in hast
haue doon q*uo*d sche com of and speed þe fast 3728
lest þat our neyghebours þe aspye
This absolon gan wipe his mouþ ful drye [*leaf* 50]
Derk was þe night as picche or as a cole /
Out atte wyndow putte sche hir hole / 3732
And absolon him fel no bet ne wers
But wiþ his mouth he kist hir naked ers
Ful sauorly, whan he was war of þis
Abak he sterte and þought it was amys 3736
For wel he wist a wo*m*man haþ no berd
he felt a þing al rough and long I-herd
And seyde fy allas what haue I do
Tehee q*uo*d sche / and clapt þe wyndow to 3740
And absolon goþ forþ a sory paas
A berd a berd / q*uo*d heende Nicholas
By goddes corps þis game goþ fair and wel
This seely absolon herd euery del 3744
And on his lippe he gan for angir byte
And to himself he seyde I schal þe quyte
Who rubbiþ now who froteth now his lippes 3747
wiþ dust wiþ sand wiþ straw wiþ cloth wiþ chippes
But absolon þat seith fulofte allas
My soule bytake I vnto Sathanas
But me were leuer þan alle þis toun q*uo*d he
Of þis dispit awroken for to be 3752
Allas q*uo*d he allas I nadde bleynt
his hoote loue was cold and al I-queynt
For fro þat tyme þat he had kist hire ers
Of paramours ne sette he nat a kers 3756
For he was helyd of his maledye
Fulofte p*ar*amours he gan deffye
And wept as doþ a child þat is I-bete
A softe paas went he ouer þe strete / 3760

Vnto a smyth men clepith daun Gerueys
That' in his forge smythed plowh harneys
He scharpeth schar and cultre bysily
This absolon knokkeþ al esily 3764
And seyde vnto Geruays and þat' anoon
what' who art' thou? it' am I Absolon
what' Absolon what' [1]cristes swete tree [[1] *a later* for *is put here*]
why ryse ȝe so rathe benedicite [*leaf* 50, *back*] 3768
what' eyleþ ȝou some gay gurl god it woot'
haþ brought' ȝou þus vpon þe verytrot'
By seinte noet / ȝe wot' wel what I mene
This absolon ne roughte nat' a bene 3772
Of' al þis pley no word agayn he ȝaf'
For he hadde more tow on his distaf'
Than Gerueys knew and seyde freend so deere
That' hote cultre in þe Chymney heere 3776
As lene it' me I haue þer wiþ to doone
I wol it bring' agayn to þe ful soone
Gerueys answerde / certes were it' gold
Or in a poke nobles al vntold 3780
ȝe schul him haue as I am trewe smyth
Ey cristes fo[1] what wil ȝe do þer wiþ [[1] *a later* to *is added*]
Ther of' q*uo*d absolon be as be may
I schal wel telle it' þe to morwe day 3784
And caughte þe cultre by þe colde stele
Ful soft' out at þe dore he gan it' stele /
And wente vnto þe carpenteres wal
he cowheþ first' and knokkeþ þer wiþ al 3788
vpon the wyndow right' as he dede er
This alisou*n* answerde who is ther
That' knokkest' so? I warant' it a þeef'
why nay q*uo*d he god woot' my sweete leef' 3792
I am þyn absolon, O my derlyng'
Of' gold q*uo*d he I haue þe brought' a ryng'
My mooder ȝaf' it' me so god me saue
Ful fyn it is and þe*r*to wel I-graue 3796

This wol I ȝiue þe / if' þou me kisse
This Nicholas was rise for to pysse
And þought' he wold amenden al þe Iape
he schulde kisse his ers or þat he skape 3800
And vp þe wyndow dyde he hastily
And out' his ers putteþ he pryuely
Ouer þe buttok' to haunche bon
And þer wiþ spak' þis clerk' þis absolon 3804
Spek' sweete bryd I wot' nat wher þou art /.
This Nicholas anon let' flee a fart' [leaf 51]
As gret as it' had ben a thundir dent
And with þat' strook' he was almost' I-blent' 3808
And he was redy with his yren hoot
And Nicholas amyd þe ers he smoot
Of' goþ þe skyn an hande brede aboute
The hoote cultre brente so his toute 3812
And for þe smert' / he wende for to dye
As he were wood anon he gan to crye
help watir watir / help for goddes herte
This Carpenter out of' his slumber sterte 3816
And herd on crye watir as he were wood
He þought' allas for now comeþ Noes flood
he sit' him vp wiþoute wordes mo
And wiþ his ax he smot' þe corde a-two 3820
And doun he goþ he fond nowthir to selle /
No bred ne ale til he com to þe selle/
Vpon þe floor and þer aswoun he lay
vp styrt' hir alisoun and Nicholay 3824
And cryden out' and harrow in þe strete /
The neyghebours boþe smal and grete /
In ronnen for to gauren on þis man
That' a swowne lay boþe pale and wan 3828
For with þe fal he brosten had his arm
But' stond he muste to his owne harm
For whan he spak' he was anon born doun
with heende Nicholas and alisoun 3832

They tolden euery man þat he was wood
he was a gast' and feerd of' Noes flood
Thurgh fantasie þat' of' his vanite /
he hadde I-bought' him knedyng' tubbes þre / 3836
And hadde hem hanged in þe roof' aboue /
And þat' he preyed hem for goddes loue /
To sitten in þe roof' p*ar* compaignye
The folk' gan lawhen at' his fantasye / 3840
In to þe roof' þey kyken and þey gape
And torne al his harm in to a Iape
For what' so euer þe carpent*er* answerde
Hit' was for nought' no man his resoun herde [*lf* 51, *bk*] 3844
wiþ oþis greet' he was so sworn a doun
That' he was holden wood in al þe toun
For euery clerk' anon right' heeld wiþ oþir
They seyde þe man was wood my leeue broþ*er* 3848
And euery man gan lawhen at' his stryf'
Thus swyued was þe Carpenteres wyf'
For al his kepyng' and his gelousye
And absolon haþ kist' hir neþir ye 3852
And Nicholas is skaldid in his towte
This tale is doon and god saue al þe route
HEre endeth þe Millers tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And bygynneþ þe prologe of þe Reeue

Whan folk hadde lawhen of þis nyce caas
Of Absolon and heende Nicholas 3856
Dyuerse folk dyuersely þey seyde
But for þe moste part þey lowh and pleyde /
Ne at þis tale I sawh no man him greue
But it were oonly Osewald þe Reeue 3860
By cause he was of Carpentrye craft
A litel Ire is in his herte is laft
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite
So theek quod he ful wel coude I þe quyte 3864
with bleryng of a prowd mylleres ye
If þat me luste speke of Ribaudye
But yk am old me list not pley for age
Gras tyme is doon my foddir is now forage 3868
My whyte top writeþ myn olde ȝeeres /
Myn hert is al so moulyd as myn heeres /
And ȝit I fare as doþ an open-ers
That ilke fruyt is euer lenger þe wers 3872
Til it be rote in mullok or in stree
we olde men I drede so fare we /
Til we be roten can we nat be rype
we hoppen alway whil þe world wol pype 3876
For in oure wil þer stikeþ euer a nayl
To haue an hoor heed and a greene tayl
As hath a leek for þough oure might be doon
Oure wil desireþ folye euer in oon 3880
For whan we may nat do þan wol we speke / [leaf 52]
ȝet in oure aisshen old is fyr I-reke /
Foure gledys haue we which I schal deuyse
Auantyng / lyyng / angur coueytise 3884
This foure sparkys longen vnto eelde /
Oure olde lymes mowen be vnweelde /

But' wil ne schal nat' fayle vs þat' is soþ
And ȝet' I haue alwey a coltes toþ 3888
As many a ȝeer as it is passed henne
Syn þat' my tappe of' lyf' bygan to renne /
For sikirlik' whan I was born anon
Deth drough̄ þe tappe of' lyf' and leet' it' goon 3892
And now so longe / haþ þe tappe I-ronne
Til þat almost' al empty is þe tonne
The streem of' lyf' now droppeth on þe chymbe
The sely tonge may wel rynge and chimbe[1] 3896
Of' wrecchednes þat' passed is ful ȝoore [[1] ?*first* clymbe]
with olde folk' / sauf' dotage is no more
Whan þat' oure host' had herd oure sermonyng'
he gan to speke as lordly as a kyng' 3900
And seyde what' amounteþ al þis wit
what' schul we speke alday of' holy wryt'
The deuyl made a Reue for to preche
Or of' a sowter schipman or a leche / 3904
Sey forþ þi tale and tarye nat' þe tyme
Lo heer is Depford / and it' is passed prime
Lo Grenewich þer many a schrewe is Inne
It' were al tyme þi tale to bygynne 3908
NOw sires quod þis Osewold þe Reue
I pray ȝow alle // þat' noon of ȝou him greeue
Though̄ I answere and somwhat' sette his howue
For leeful is wiþ force force to showue 3912
This dronken myllere haþ I-told vs heer
how þat' bygiled was a Carpenter
P*ar*auenture in scorn for I am oon
And by ȝour leue I schal him quyte anoon 3916
Right' in his cherles termes wol I speke /
I pray to God his nekke mot' tobreke
he can wel in myn eye see a stalke [*leaf* 52, *back*]
But in his owne he can nought' seen a balke 3920
HEre endeþ þe prologe of' þe Reue
[*No break in the MS.*]

And here bygynneþ his tale

AT Trompyngtoun nat' fer fro Cantebrigge
Ther goth a brook' and ouer þat a brigge
Vpon þe whiche brook' þer stant' a melle
And þis is verray soþ þat' I ȝou telle / 3924
A meller was þer dwellyng many a day
As eny Pecok' he was prowd and gay
Pipen he coude and fissh and nettys beete
And turne cuppes wrastle wel and scheete 3928
Ay by his belt' he bar a long' panade
And of' a swerd ful trenchaunt' was þe blade
A Ioly popper bar he in his pouche
Ther was no man for perel durst' him touche / 3932
A Scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose
Round was his face and camois was his nose
As pyled as an ape was his skulle/
he was a market' beter at' þe fulle 3936
Ther durste no wight' hand vpon him legge
That' he ne swor anon he schuld abegge /
A þeef' he was for-soþ of' corn and mele
And þat a sleigh and vsyng' for to stele / 3940
his name was hoote deynous Symekyn
A wyf' he hadde / come of' noble kyn
The parsoun of' the toun hir fader was
with hire he ȝaf' ful many a panne of' bras 3944
For þat' Symkyn schuld in his blood allye
Sche was I-fostryd in a Nonnerye
For Symkyn wolde no wyf' as he sayde
But' sche were wel I-norissched and a mayde / 3948
To sauen his estaat' and ȝomanrye
And sche was proud and pert/ as is a pye
A ful fair sighte was þer on hem two /
On haly dayes bifore hir wolde he go 3952

with his typet' ybounde aboute his heed
And sche cam aftir in a gyte of' reed
And Symkyn hadde hosen of' þe same / [leaf 53]
Ther durste no wight' clepe hir but' ma dame / 3956
was noon so hardy walkyng' by þe weye
That' with hir dorste rage or elles pleye
But' if' he wold be slayn of' Symekyn·
wiþ panade or with knyf' or boydekyn· 3960
For gelous folk' ben perilous eueremo
Algate þey wolde here wyues wende so
And eek' for sche was somdel smoterlich
Sche was as deyne as water in a dich 3964
As ful of' hokir and of' bissemare
hir thoughte ladyes oughten hir to spare /
what' for hir kynreed and hir nortelrye
That' sche had lerned in þe Nonnerye 3968
A douȝter hadden þey betwix hem two
Of' .xx^ti ȝeer wiþouten eny mo
Sauyng' a child that' was of' half' ȝer age
In cradil lay and was a proper page / 3972
This wenche þikke and wel I-growen was
wiþ Camoys nose and eyȝen gray as glas /
And buttokkes brode and brestes round and hye
But' right' fair was hir heer I wol nat' lye / 3976
The parsoun of' þe toun for sche was feir
In purpos was to maken hir his heir /
Boþe of' his catel / and his mesuage /
And straunge made it of' hir mariage 3980
his purpos was to bystow hir hye
In to som worþy blood of' ancetrye
For holy chirche good moot' be despendid
On holy chirche blood þat' is descendid 3984
Therfore he wolde his Ioly blood honoure /
Though þat' he schulde holy chirche deuoure
GRet' soken had þis meller oute of doute
with whete and malt' of' al þe lond aboute 3988

And namely þer was a gret Collegge
Men clepe it þe Soler hall of Cantebregge
Ther was here whete and eek here malt I-grounde /
And on a day it happed on a stounde / 3992
Syk lay þe mauncyple on a maledye [*leaf* 53, *back*]
Men wenden wisly þat he schulde dye
For which þis meller stal both mele & corn
A þousend part more þan byforn 3996
For þer biforn he stal but curteysly
But now he is a þeef outrageously
For which þe wardeyn chidde and made fare
But ther of sette þe meller not a tare 4000
he crakked boost and swor it was nat so
Thanne weren þere poore scoleres tuo
That dwelten in þe halle of which I seye
Testyf þey were and lusty for to pleye 4004
And oonly for here mirþe and reuelrye[1] [[1] *the* l *is later*]
Vppon þe wardeyn bysily þey crye
To ȝeue hem leue but a litel stounde /
To go to melle and see here corn I-grounde 4008
And hardily þey dursten ley here nekke /
The meller schuld nat stel hem half a pekke
Of corn by sleighte ne by force hem reue
And atte last þe wardeyn ȝaf hem leue 4012
Iohn̄ hight þat oon and Alayn hight *þat* oþer
Of o toun were þey born þat highte Strothir /
Fer in þe north I can nat telle where /
This aleyn makeþ redy al his gere 4016
And on an hors þe sak he cast anoon
Forþ goþ aleyn þe clerk and also Ion
wiþ good swerd and wiþ bocler by her side
Iohn̄ knew þe way þat hem needith no gyde / 4020
And at þe mylle þe sak a-doun he layth
Alayn spak first al heil Symond in faith
how fares þy faire dought*er* and þy wyf
aleyn welcome q*uo*d Symond by my lyf 4024

And Iohñ also how now what' do ȝe heere
By god q*uo*d Iohñ, Symond, neede has na peere
him falles serue himself' þat' has na swayn
Or elles he is a fon as clerkes sayn 4028
Our mancyple as I hope wil be deed
Swa werkes ay þe wanges in his heed
And therfore I is come and eek' aleyn [*leaf* 54]
To grynde oure corn and carie it / ham ageyn 4032
I prey ȝou speed vs in al þat' ȝe may
It' schal be doon q*uo*d Symkyn by my fay
what' wol ȝe do whil þat' it' is in hande
By god right' by þe hoper wol I stande 4036
Q*uo*d Iohñ and se how þat' þe corn gas Inne
ȝet' sawh I neuer by my fader kynne /
how þat' þe hoper waggis to and fra
Aleyn answerde / Iohñ and wiltow swa 4040
Than wol I be by-neþe by my croun
And se how þat' þe mele fallys doun
In to þe troughñ þat schal be my desport /
For Ion in faith I may be of' ȝour sort' 4044
I is as ille a meller as ere ȝe
This mellere smyleth for here nycete
And þoughñt' al þis is doon but for a wyle
They wenen þat' no man may hem bigile 4048
But' by my þrift' ȝet' schal I blere here ye
For al here sleighñt' and al here philosophie /
The more queynte knakkes þat' þey make /
The more wol I stele whan I take / 4052
In stede of' mele ȝet' wol I ȝeue hem bren
The grettest' clerkes beþ not' wisest' men
As whilom to þe wolf' þus spak' þe mare
Of' al hert' art' ne counte I nat' a tare 4056
Out' at' þe dore he goth ful pryuyly
whan þat' he saugh his tyme sotyly
he lokeþ vp and doun til he hath founde
The Clerkes hors þer as it' stood I-bounde / 4060

Behynde þe mylle vnder a leuesel
And to þe hors he goþ him faire and wel
He strepeth of' þe bridel right' anoon
And whan þe hors was loos he gan to goon 4064
Toward þe fen þere wilde mares renne
For wiþ wihe / þurgh̄ þikke and eek' þurgh̄ þenne
This meller goth agayn and no word seyde
But' doth his note and wiþ þe clerkes pleyde / 4068
Til þat' her corn was fair and wel I-grounde [*leaf* 54, *back*]
And whan þe mele was sakked and I-bounde /
This Iohn̄ goþ out' and fynt his hors a-way
And gan to crye harrow and weylaway 4072
Oure hors is lost' aleyn for goddes banes
Step on þy feet' cum on man al at anes
Aleyn ȝour wardeyn haþ his parfray lorn
This aleyn al forgeteþ mele and corn 4076
Al was out' of' his mynd his housbondrye
what' wikked way is he gan gan he crye
The wyf' cam lepyng' inward wiþ a ren
Sche seyde allas ȝour hors goþ to þe fen 4080
wiþ wylde mares as fast' as he may go /
vnþank' come on his heed þat' band him so /
And he þat' bettir schuld han knyt' þe Reyne
Allas q*uo*d Ioh*a*n aleyn / for cristes peyne 4084
Leg' doun þi swerd and I sal myn alswa /
I is ful wigh̄t' god wat' as is a Ra
By goddes hart/ he sal nat' scape vs bathe
why nad þou put þe capil in þe lathe 4088
Ilhail aleyn by god þou is a fon
This sely clerkes speeden hem anoon
Toward þe fen boþe aleyn and eek' Ion
And whan þe myller sawh þat' þey were gon 4092
he half' a busshel of' þe flour haþ take
And bad his wyf' go knede it in a cake
he seyde I trowe þe clerkes ben a ferd
ȝet' can a Miller make a clerkes berd 4096

For al his art/ ȝe lat hem go here way
lo wher þey goon // ȝe lat þe children play
They get hym nat so lightly by my croun
This seely clerkes ronnen vp and doun 4100
wiþ keep / keep. stand stand Iossa ware derere
Ga wightly þou and I sal keep him heere /
But schortly til þat it was verray night /
They cowde nat þough þey did al here mig̃ht 4104
here capil cacche it ran away so fast /
Til in a diche þey caug̃ht / him atte last/
wery and wete as bestys in þe Reyn [leaf 55]
Comth sely Iohn̄ and wiþ him comþ aleyn 4108
Allas quod Iohn̄ þat day þat I was born
Now are we dryue til heþing and to scorn
Oure corn is stole men woln vs foles calle /
Bathe þe wardeyn and eek our felaws alle / 4112
And namely þe myller weyloway
Thus pleyneth Iohn̄ as he goþ by þe way
Toward þe mylle and bayard in his hand
The myller sittyng by þe fyr he fand 4116
For it was nig̃ht and forþer mig̃ht þey nought
But for þe loue of god þey him bisoug̃ht
As herberwh̄ and of ese as for her peny
þe myller sayd agayn if þer be eny 4120
Swich as it is ȝit schul ȝe haue ȝour part
Myn hous is streyt. / but ȝe han lerned art/
ȝe conne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foote of space / 4124
let se now if þis place may suffyse
Or make it rom wiþ speche as is ȝour gyse
Now Symond seyde þis Iohn̄ by seynt Cuthberd
Ay is þou mery and þat is fair answerd 4128
I haue herd say men suld take of twa þinges
Slik as he fynt / or tak slik as he bringes
But specially I pray þe host ful deere
Get vs som mete and drynk and mak vs cheere 4132

And we wol paye trewly at' þe fulle
wiþ empty hand men may na hawkes tulle
Lo heer our siluer redy for to spende
This meller in to toun his doughter sende 4136
For ale and breed and rosted hem a goos
And band her hors he schold no more go loos
And in his owne chambir hem made a bed
with schetys and with chalouns fair I-spred 4140
Nat' from his owen bed ten foot' or twelue /
his doughter had a bed al by hir selue
Right' in þe same chambre by and by
Hit mighte be no bet' and cause why / 4144
Ther was no rommer herberw in þe place [*leaf* 55, *back*]
They sowpen and þey speke hem to solace
And dronken euer strong' ale atte beste
Aboute mydnyght' wente þey to reste 4148
wel haþ þe myller vernysshed his heed
Ful pale he was for dronken and nat reed
he ȝoxeth and he spekeþ þurgh þe nose /
As he were on þe quakke or on þe pose / 4152
To bed he goþ and wiþ him goþ his wyf'
As eny Iay sche light' was and iolyf'
So was his ioly whistel wel y-wet
The cradil at' hire beddes feet' is set 4156
To rokken and to ȝiue þe child to souke /
And whan þat' dronken was al in þe crouke
To bedde went the douȝter right' anon
To bedde goþ aleyn and also Ion 4160
Ther nas no more him needed no dwale
This meller haþ so wysly bibbed ale /
That' as an hors he snortith in his sleep
Ne of' his tayl bihynd took / he no keep 4164
his wyf' burdoun a ful strong'
Men might' her rowtyng' heeren a forlong'
The wenche routeþ eek' par companye
Aleyn þe clerk' þat herd þis melodye 4168

He pokyd Iohñ / and seyde slepistow
Herdistow euer slik' a sang' er now
Lo slik' a couplyng' is betwix hem alle
A wilde fyr vpon þair bodyes falle 4172
wha herkned euer swilk' a ferly þing' /
ȝe þei sul haue þe flour of' ille endyng'
This lange night' þer tydes me na rest'
But' ȝet' na fors al sal be for þe best' 4176
For Iohñ sayd he as euer mot' I þryue
If' þat' I may ȝone wenche sal I swyue
Som esement haþ lawe schapen vs
For Iohñ þer is a lawe þat says þus 4180
That if' a man in a poynt be agreued ¶ Qui in vno granatur in alio debet releuari
That in anoþer he sal be releeued
Oure corn is stoln soþly it' is na nay [leaf 56]
And we haue had an ylle fitt' to day 4184
And syn I sal haue nan amendement
Agayn my los I wol haue esement /
By godde sale it' sal nan oþer be /
This Iohñ answerd / aleyn auyse þe 4188
The Miller is a parlous man he sayde
And if' þat' he out' of' his sleep abrayde
he mighte do vs boþe a vilonye
Aleyn answerd I count it' nat' a flye 4192
And vp he roos and by þe wenche crepte
This wenche lay vpright' and faste slepte
Til he so neih was or sche mighte aspye
That it had ben to late for to crye 4196
And schortly for to seye þey weren at oon
Now pley aleyn for I wol speke of' Ion
¶ This Iohñ lith stille a forlong' whyle or two
And to him self' compleyned of' his woo 4200
Allas quod he þis is a wikked Iape /
Now may I say þat I am but' an ape
ȝet' haþ my felaw somwat' for his harm
he haþ þe myllers doughter in his arm 4204

he auntred him and has his needes sped
And I lye as a draf' sak' in my bed
And when þis Iape is tald anoþer day
I sal be held a daf' a cokenay 4208
·vnhardy is vnsely as men saith
I wol arise and auntre it in good faiþ
And vp he ros and softely he wente /
vnto þe cradil and in his hand it hente 4212
And bar it softe vnto his beddis feet
Soone after þis þe wyf' hir routyng' leet /
And gan awake and went' hir for to pisse
And cam agayn and gan hir cradel mysse 4216
And groped heer and þer but' sche fond noon
Allas q*uo*d sche / I had almost' mys goon
I had almost' goon to þe clerkes bed
Ey bendicite þan had I foule I-sped 4220
And forþ sche goþ til sche þe cradil fand [*leaf* 56, *back*]
Sche gropith alway forther with hir hand
And fand þe bed and þoughte nat' but' good
By cause þat' þe cradil by hit' stood 4224
Nat' knowyng' wher sche was for it' was derk'
But' fair and wel sche creep in to þe clerk'
And lith ful stille and wolde han caught' a sleep
wiþinne a while Iohn̄ þe clerk' vp leep 4228
And on this goode wyf' leyþ on ful sore
So mery a fytt/ ne hadd sche nat' ful ȝore
he prikeþ harde and deepe as he were mad
This Ioly lyf' han þis twey clerkes had 4232
Til þat' þe þridde cok' bygan to synge
Aleyn wax wery in þe dawenynge
For he had swonken al þe longe nigh̄t/
And seyd far wel malyn my sweete wigh̄t 4236
The day is come I may no lenger byde /
But' euermo wher so I go or ryde
I am þin owen clerk' so haue I seel
Now deere le*m*man q*uo*d sche go far wel 4240

But or þou go o thing' I wol þe telle
whan þat' þou wendist' homward by þe melle
Right' at' þe entre of' þe dore byhynde
Thou schalt' a cake of' half' a busshel fynde 4244
That' was I-maked of' þyn owen mele
Which þat' I hilp myn owen self' to stele
And goode lemman god þe saue and kepe
And wiþ þat' word almost' sche gan to weepe 4248
Aleyn vprist' and þought' er þat it dawe
I wol go crepen in by my felawe
And fand þe cradil wiþ his hand anon
By god þought he al wrong' I haue I-goon 4252
My heed is toty of' my swynk' to nyght'
That' / makes me þat' I ga nouȝt' aright'
I wot' wel by þe cradel I haue mys go
heer lith þe myller and his wyf' also 4256
Forþ he goþ in twenty deuelway
vnto þe bed þer as þe Miller lay
he wende haue crope by his felaw Ion [leaf 57]
And by þe myller in he creep anon 4260
And caught' him by þe nekke and soft' he spak'
And seyde Ion þou swyneshed awak'
For cristes sowle and here a noble game
For by þat' lord þat' cleped is seynt' Iame 4264
As I haue þries in þis schorte night'
Swyued þe myllers douȝter bolt' vpright'
whiles þou hast' as a coward ben agast'
ȝe false harlot' quod þis mellere hast/ 4268
A false traitour false clerk' quod he
Thou schalt' be deed by goddes dignite
who durste be so bold to disparage
My doughter þat' is com of' hih lynage / 4272
And by þe þrote-bolle he caught' aleyn
And he hent' him dispitously ageyn
And on þe nose he smot' him with his fest'
Doun ran þe blody streem vpon his brest' 4276

And in þe floor wiþ nose and mouþ to-broke
They walweden as pigges in a poke
And vpon þay goon and doun þey goon anon
Til þat' þe Millner stumbled at a ston 4280
And doun he felle / bakward on his wyf'
That' wyste noþing' of' þis nyce stryf'
For sche was falle a sleepe a litel wight'
wiþ Ion þe Clerk' þat' waked al þe night' 4284
And wiþ þe falle right out' of' slepe sche brayde
help holy croys of' Bromholme sche sayde
In manus tuas lord to þe I calle /
Awake Symond þe feend is in þin halle 4288
My hert' is broken help I am but deed
Ther lythe vpon my wombe and on my*n* heed
Help Symkyn for þis false clerkes fight'
This Iohn̄ stert' vp as fast' as euer he might' 4292
And grasped by þe walles to and fro
To fynde a staf' & sche sturt' vp also
And knewe þe estres bet' þan dede Ion
And by þe wal sche took' a staf' anon 4296
And sawh a litel glymeryng' of' light' [*leaf* 57, *back*]
For at' an hool in schon þe moone light'
And by þat' light' she saugh hem boþe two
But' sikirly sche wiste nat' who was who 4300
But' sche saugh a whit' þing' in hir ye
And whan sche gan þis white þing' aspye
Sche wend þe clerk' had wered a volupeer
And wiþ a staf' sche drough hir neer and neer 4304
And wend haue hit' þis Aleyn atte fulle
And smot' þis meller on þe piled sculle
And doun he goþ and cryeþ harrow I dye
This clerkes beeten him wel and leet' him lye 4308
And greyth hem wel and take her hors anon
And eek/ here mele and hoom anon þey goon
And at' the Millen dore þey tok' here cake
Of' half' a buisshel flour ful wel I-bake 4312

Thus is þe prowde Miller wel I-bete
And haþ I-lostᵗ þe gryndyngᵗ ofᵗ þe whete /
And payed for þe soper euerydel
Ofᵗ aleyn and ofᵗ Iohn̄ þatᵗ beten him wel 4316
His wyfᵗ is swyued and his doughter als
Lo such itᵗ is a Miller to be fals
And þ*er*to þis p*rouer*be is seyd ful soþ
he þar natᵗ weene wel þatᵗ euyl doþ 4320
A gylour schal him selfᵗ bygiled be
And god þatᵗ sittestᵗ in þy mageste
Saue al þis compaignie gretᵗ and smale / 4323
Thus haue I quitᵗ þe Miller in his tale / ¶ herᵗ endeþ þe Reeues tale

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

The Cook' of' londo*u*n whil þe Reeue spak'
For Ioye he þought' / he clawed him on þe bak'
ha ha q*uo*d he / for cristes passio*u*n
This meller haþ a scharp conclusio*u*n / 4328
vpon his argume*n*t of' herburgage
wel seyde Salomon in his langage /
Ne bryng' nat' euery man in to þyn hous
For herburgage by night' is p*er*ilous 4332
wel aught' a man avised for to be
whom þat' he brought' in to his pryuyte [*leaf* 58]
I pray to god so gyf' my body care /
ȝif' euer siþþe I highte hogge of' ware 4336
herd I better myller set' a werke /
he hadde a Iape of' malice in þe derke /
And þerfore if' ȝe fouche sauf' to heere
But' god forbede þat' we stynten heere / 4340
A tale of' me þat' am a pouer man
I wol ȝow telle as wel as I kan
A litel Iape þat' fel in oure cite
Oure host' seyde I graunt it the 4344
Now telle on Roger & loke it be good
For many a pastey hastow lete blood
And many a Iakk' of' douer hastow sold
That' haþ be twyes hoot' and twyes cold 4348
Of' many a pilgrym hastow cristes curs
For þy persly þey faren ȝet' þe wors
That' they haue eten wiþ þe stubbil goos
For in þy schoppe is many a flye loos 4352
Now goode / gentil Roger by þy name /
But' ȝit' I pray þe be nought' wroþ for game
[. . . . . *No gap in the MS.*]
Thow saist' ful soþ q*uo*d Roger by my faith 4356

But soth play quad play as þe flemy*ng* saith
[. . . . . *No gap in the MS.*]
Be thou nat wroþ or we dep*ar*te her
Though þat my tale be of an hostyler 4360
But naþeles I wol not telle it ȝit/
But or we dep*ar*te it schal be quyt/
And þer wiþ al he lowh̄ / and made chere
And seyde his tale as ȝe schal after heere 4364

[*No break in the MS.*]

A Prentys dwelled whilom in oure Citee,
Of a craft of vitaillers was he
Gaylard he was as goldfynch in þe schawe /
Broun as a bery and a p*ro*pre felawe 4368
wiþ lokkes blak and kempt ful fetously
Dauncen he cowde wel and prately
That he was cleped P*er*kyn reuellour
he was ful of loue and p*ar*amour 4372
As is þe hony combe of hony swete
wel were þe wenche þat mighte him meete [*leaf* 58, *back*]
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *No gap in the MS.*] 4376
FOr whan þer eny rydyng was in cheepe /
Out of þe schoppe þider wolde he lepe /
Tyl he hadde al þat sight I-seyn
And daunced wel he nold nat come ageyn 4380
And gadred him a meyne of his sort
To hoppe and synge and make such disport
And þer þey setten steuene for to meete
To pleyen atte dys in such a strete 4384
For in þe toun ne was þer no prentys
That fairer cowde caste a peyre dys
Than P*er*kyn couþe and þ*er*to he was free /
Of his dispence in place of pryuyte 4388
That fand his mayster wel in his chaffare
For often tyme he fond his box ful bare
For such a ioly prentys reuelour
That hauntеþ dys Reuel or p*ar*amour 4392
his maister schal it in his schoppe abye
Al haue he no part of þe mynstralcye
For þefte and ryot be conuertyble
Al can þey pley on giterne and rubible 4396

Reuel and troupe as in a lowe degre
They ben ful wroþ al day as ȝe may see
This Ioly Prentys with his mayster bood
Til he was oute neyȝ of' his prentys hood 4400
Al were he snybbyd boþe erly and late
And som tyme lad with reuel in to Newgate
But' atte laste his mayster him bythought'
vpon a day whan he his papyr sought' 4404
Of' a prouerbe þat' siþ þis same word
wel bette is roten appul out' of' hord
Than it' rote al þe remenaunt/
So fareth it' by a ryotous seruaunt' 4408
hit' is ful lasse harm to late him pa:
Than he schend al þe seruauntes in þe place
Therfore his mayster ȝaf' him acqueyntaunce
And bad him go wiþ sorwe and wiþ meschaunce 4412
And þus þe ioly prentys had his leue //
Now let' hym ryot' al þe night' or leue.

[*Lines* 4413, 4414 *form the last line of the page in the MS.*]

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

[THE SPURIOUS TALE OF GAMELYN.]

LItheth and lestneþ and herkneþ aright [*leaf* 59] 1
And ȝe schul heere a talkyng' of' a doughty knight
Sire Iohn̄ of' Boundys was his right' name
he cowde of/ norture ynough̄ & mochil of' game 4
Thre sones þe knigh̄t' · þat' with his body he wan
The eldest' was a moche schrewe / and sone he bygan
his breþ*er*en loued wel here fader / and of' him were agast /
The eldest' des*er*ued his fadres curs / and had it at þe last' / 8
The goode kniȝt' his fader lyuede so ȝore
That' deth was comen him to and handled him ful sore
The goode knigh̄t' cared sore . sik' þer he lay
how his children scholde lyuen aft*er* his day 12
he hadde ben wyde wher . but' non housbond he was
Al þe lond þat' he had / it' was verrey purchas
Fayn he wold it' were dressed / amonges hem alle
That' ech of' hem had his part' / as it' might' falle / 16
Tho sent' he in to cuntre after wise knightes
To helpe delen his londes / and dressen hem to rightes
he sent' hem word by l*ett*res / þey schulden hye blyue
yf' þey wolde speke with him whil he was on lyue / 20

¶ Tho þe knyghtes herden / sikᵗ þer he lay
hadde þey no reste noþer nighᵗ ne day
Til þey comen to him þer he lay stille /
On his deþ bedde . to abyde goddes wille 24
Þan seyde þe goode knighᵗ sykᵗ þer he lay
lordes I ȝou warne for soþ wiþoute nay
I may no lengere lyuen heer in þis stounde
For þurgh goddes wille deþ draweth me to grounde 28
Ther nas non ofᵗ hem alle . þatᵗ herd him arightᵗ
Þatᵗ þey hadden reuþe ofᵗ þatᵗ ilke knighᵗ
And seyde sir for goddes loue ne dismay ȝou nought
God may do bote ofᵗ bale þatᵗ is now I-wrought 32
¶ Than spakᵗ þe goode knightᵗ sikᵗ þer he lay
Boote ofᵗ bale god may sende I wotᵗ it is no nay
Butᵗ I byseke ȝou kniȝtes for þe loue ofᵗ me
Goþ and dresseþ my lond amongᵗ my sones þre 36
And sires for þe loue ofᵗ god deleþ hem nat amys
And forgetiþ natᵗ Gamelyn my ȝonge sone þat is
Takeþ heed to þat on as wel as to þatᵗ oþer [*leaf* 59, *back*]
Selde ȝe see ony Eyr helpen his broþ*er* 40
¶ þo leete þey þe knighᵗ lyen þat was nought in hele /
And wenten in to counseil his londes for to dele /
For to delen hem alle /. to oon þatᵗ was her þoughtᵗ
And for Gamelyn was ȝongestᵗ / he schuld haue nouȝt 44
Al þe lond þatᵗ þer was þey dalten it in two
And leeten Gamelyn þe ȝonge wiþoute lond go
And ech ofᵗ hem seyde to oþer ful lowde
His breþ*er*en mighᵗ ȝeue him lond whan he good cowde 48
whan þey hadde deled þe lond at here wille
þey come aȝein to þe knightᵗ þer he lay ful stille
And tolden him anon-righᵗ / how þey hadden wroughᵗ
And þe knighᵗ þere he lay liked itᵗ rightᵗ noughᵗ 52
Than seyde þe knightᵗ / by seyntᵗ Martyn
For al þatᵗ ȝe haue y-doon ȝit is the lond myn
For goddes loue neyhebours stondeþ alle stille
And I wil dele my lond / after my wille 56

Iohan myn eldeste sone / schal haue plowes fyue
That' was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyue
And my myddeleste sone / fyf' plowes of' lond
That' I halp for to gete wiþ my right' hond 60
And al myn other purchas / of' londes and leedes
þat' I byqueþe gamelyn / and alle my goode steedes
And I byseke ȝow goode men þat' lawe conne of' londe
For Gamelynes loue þat' my queste stonde 64
Thus dalte þe knight' his lond by his day
Right' on his deþ bed / sik' þer he lay
And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille /
And deyde whan tyme com / as it was cristes wille 68
And anon as he was deed and vnder gras I-graue /
Sone þe elder broþer gyled þe ȝonge knaue
He took' in to his hond / his lond as his leede
And Gamelyn himselfe / to clothen and to feede 72
He clothed him and fed him yuel and eek' wroþe
And leet' his londes forfare and his houses boþe
his parkes and his woodes / and dede noþing' wel
And seþþen he it' abought' on his faire fel 76
So longe was Gamelyn in his broþeres halle [leaf 60]
For þe strengest' of' good wil þey doutiden him alle /
þer was non þer Inne nowþer ȝong' ne olde
That' wolde wraþþe Gamelyn were he neuer so bolde / 80
Gamelyn stood on a day in his broþeres ȝerde
And bygan wiþ his hond to handlen his berde
he þought' on his londes þat' layen vnsawe
And his faire Okes þat' doun were I-drawe 84
his parkes were I-broken / and his deer byreeued
Of' alle his goode steedes noon was him byleued
his howses were vnhiled / and ful yuel dight'
Tho þoughte Gamelyn it wente nought' aright 88
Afterward cam his broþer walkynge þare
And seyde to Gamelyn is our mete ȝare /
Tho wraþþed him gamelyn and swor by goddes book'
Thou schalt' go bake þi self' / I wil nouȝt be þy cook' 92

how broþer Gamelyn / how answerest' þou now /
þou spake neuer such a word as þou dost' now /
By my faith seyde Gamelyn now me þinkeþ neede /
Of' alle þe harmes þat' I haue I tok' neuer ar heede 96
My parkes ben tobroken and my deer byreued
Of' myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileued
Al þat' my fader me byquaþ al goþ to schame /
And þerfor haue þou goddes curs broþer by þy name 100
Than byspak' his broþer þat' rape was of' rees /
Stond stille gadelyng' / and hold right þy pees /
Thou schalt' be fayn for to haue þy mete and þy wede /
what' spekest' þou Gamelyn of' lond oþer of' leede 104
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þe child þat was ying'
Cristes curs mot' he haue þat' clepeþ me gadelyng'
I am no worse gadelyng' ne no worse wight'
But' born of' a lady and geten of' a knight 108
Ne durst' he nat' to Gamelyn ner a foote go
But' clepide to him his men and seyde to hem þo
Goþ and beteþ þis boy and reueþ him his wyt /
And lat' him leren anoþer tyme to answere me bet 112
Thanne seyde þe child ȝonge Gamelyn
Cristes curs mot' þou haue broþer art' þou myn
And if' I schal algate be beten anon [leaf 60, back]
Cristes curs mot' þou haue but' þou be þat' oon 116
And anon his broþer in þag' grete hete
Made his men to fette staues Gamelyn to bete
whan þat' euerich of' hem / a staf' had I-nome
Gamelyn was war anon þo he seigh hem come 120
þo gamelyn seyh hem come / he loked ouer al
And was war of' a pestel stood vnder a wal
Gamelyn was light' of' foot / and þider gan he lepe
And drof' alle his broþeres men right' on an hepe 124
he loked as a wilde lyoun and leyde on good woon
Tho his broþer say þat' he bigan to goon
he fley vp in til a loft' and schette þe dore fast'
Thus Gamelyn wiþ þe pestel made hem alle agast' 128

Some for Gamelynes loue / and some for his eyȝe /
Alle þey drowe by halues // þo he gan to pleyȝe /
what' how now seyde Gamelyn euel mot' ȝe thee
wil ȝe bygynne contek' and so sone flee / 132
Gamelyn sought' his broþ*er* / whider he was flowe
And saugh wher he loked out' / at a wyndowe /
Broþer sayde Gamelyn com a litel ner
And I wil teche þe a play atte bokeler 136
his broþ*er* him answerde and swor by seynt' Rycher
whil þe pestel is in þin hond I wil come no neer
Broþer I wil make þy pees / I swere by cristes ore
Cast' away þe pestel and wraþþe þe nomore / 140
I mot' neede sayde Gamelyn wraþþe me at' oones
For thou wolde make þy men to breke myne boones
Ne had I hadde mayn and mighť in myn armes
To haue I-put' hem fro me he wolde haue do me harmes 144
Gamelyn sayde his broþer be þou nought' wroþ
For to seen þe haue harm it were me right' loþ
I ne dide it nouȝt' broþ*er* but' for a fondyng'
For to loken or þou were strong' and art' so ying' 148
Com a do*un* þan to me and g*ra*unte me my bone
Of' þing' I wil þe aske / and we schul saughte sone
Doun þan cam his broþ*er* þat' fykil was and felle
And was swiþe sore agast' of' þe pestelle 152
he seyde broþ*er* Gamelyn aske me þy boone [*leaf* 61]
And loke þou me blame but' I g*ra*unte sone
Thanne seyde Gamelyn broþer I-wys
And we schulle ben at oon þou most' me g*ra*unte þis 156
Al þat' my fader me byquath whil he was on lyue /
þou most' do me it haue ȝif' we schul nat' stryue /
That' schalt' þou haue Gamelyn I swere by cristes ore
Al þat' þi fader the byquaþ þough þou woldest' haue more 160
Thy lond þat lyþ laye ful wel it schal be sowe
And þyn howses reysed vp þat' ben leyd so lowe
Thus seyde þ^e^ knight' to Gamelyn wiþ mowthe /
And þought' eek' of' falsnes / as he wel couþe / 164

The king' þought' on tres*oun* / and Gamelyn on noon
And went' and kist his broþer / and whan þey were at oon
Allas ȝonge Gamelyn noþing' he ne wiste /
wiþ which a false tres*oun* his bro*þer* hi*m* kiste / 168

LIþeth and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝour tonge
And ȝe schul heere talkyng' of' Gamelyn þe yonge
Ther was þer bysiden cryed a wrastlyng'
And þ*er*for þer was sette vp a Ram and a Ryng' 172
And Gamelyn was in good wil/ to wende þ*er*to /
For to preuen his mig̃ht' what' he cowþe do
Broþer seyde Gamelyn by seynt Richer
Thou most' lenę me to nyȝt' // a litel Courser 176
That' is freisch to the spore on for to ryde
I most' on an Erande a litel her byside
By god seyd his brother of' steedes in my stalle
Go and chese þe þe best' and spare non of' alle 180
Of' steedes or of' course þat stonden hem bisyde
And tel me goode bro*þer* whider þou wolt ryde
¶ her byside broþer is cryed a wrastlyng'
And þ*er*for schal be set' vp a Ram and a Ryng' 184
Moche worschip it were bro*þer* to vs alle
Might' I þe Ram and þe Ryng' bryng' home to þis halle
A steede þer was sadeled smertely and skeet'
Gamelyn did a paire spores fast' on his feet' 188
he set' his foot' in styrop / þe steede he bystrood
And toward þe wrastelyng' þe ȝonge child rood
Tho Gamelyn þe yonge was ride out at' þe gate [*leaf* 61, *back*]
The fals kniȝt his broþer lokked it after þate 192
And bysoughte ihū c*ri*st' þat' is heuen kyng'
he mighte breke his nekke in þat' wrastlyng'
As sone as Gamelyn com þer þe place was /
he lighte do*un* of' his steede and stood on þe gras / 196
And þer he herd a Frankeleyn wayloway syng'
And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng'
Goode man seyde Gamelyn why makestow þis fare
Is þer no man þat' may ȝou helpe out of' þis care 200

Allas seyde þis Frankeleyn þat euer was I bore
For tweye stalworþe sones / I wene þat I haue lore
A Champio*un* is in þe place / þat haþ I-wrought me sorwe
For he haþ slayn my two sones / but if god hem borwe / 204
I wold ȝeue ten pound by ihū crist and more
wiþ þe nones I fand a man to handil him sore
Goode man seyde Gamelyn wilt þou wel doon
hold myn hors whil my man draweþ of my schoon · 208
And help my man to kepe my cloþes and my steede /
And I wil in to place go / to loke if I may speede /
By god sayde þe Frankeleyn anon it schal be doon
I wil my self be þy man / and drawen of þy schoon 212
And wende þou in to þe place / ihū c*rist* þe speede /
And drede not of þy cloþes nor of þy goode steede /
BArfoot and vngert . Gamelyn in cam
Alle þat weren in þe place heede of hi*m* þey nam 216
how he durst auntre him of him to doon his mighť
That was so doughty champio*un* in wrastlyng and in fight
vp sterte þe Champio*un* raply and anoon
Toward ȝonge Gamelyn / he bigan to goon 220
And sayde who is þy fader and who is þy sire
For soþe þou art a gret fool þat þou come hire
Gamelyn answerde þe champio*un* tho
þou knewe wel my fader / whil he couþe go 224
whiles he was on lyue / by seint martyn
Sir Iohn of Bo*un*dys was his name and I gamelyn
Felaw seyde þe champio*un* al so mot I þryue
I knew wel þy fader whil he was on lyue 228
And þiself Gamelyn I wil þat þou it heere [*leaf* 62]
whil þou were a ȝong boy a moche schrewe þou were
þan seyde Gamelyn and swor by c*ri*stes ore
Now I am older woxe þou schalt me fynd a more 232
By god sayde þe Champio*un* welcome mote þou be
Come þou ones in myn hond schalt þou neuer þe
It was wel wiþinne þe night and þe moone schon
whan Gamelyn and þe Champio*un* to-gider gon to goon 236

The champio*un* caste tornes to Gamelyn þat' was p*rest*'
And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him doon his best'
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe Champio*un*
Thou art' fast' aboute to brynge me a do*un* 240
Now I haue I-proued many tornes of' þyne
Thow most' he seyde prouen on or tuo of' myne
Gamelyn to þe Champio*un* ȝede smartly anon
Of' alle þe tornes þat he cowþe he schewed him but' oon 244
And kast' him on þe left' syde þat' þre ribbes tobrak'
And þ*er*to his oon arm þat' ȝaf' a gret crak'
Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon
Schal it' be holde for a cast' or elles for noon . 248
By god seyd þe Champio*un* whe*þer* þat' it bee
he þat comes ones i*n* þin hand schal he neuer þee
Than seyde þe Frankeleyn / þat had his sones þere
Blessed be þou gamelyn þat euer þou bore were 252
The F*ra*nkleyn seyd to þe Champio*un* of' hi*m* stood hi*m* noon
This is yonge Gamelyn þat taughte þe þis pleye [eye
Aȝein answerd the Champio*un* þat liked no þing' well
he is a liþer mayster and his pley is riȝt' fell 256
Siþ I wrastled first' / it is I-go ful ȝore
But I was neuere my lyf' handled so sore
Gamelyn stood in þe place allone wiþoute serk'
And seyd if' þ*er* be eny mo lat' hem come to werk' 260
The Champio*un* þat' peyned hi*m* to werke so sore
It' semeþ by his contina*u*nce þat he wil nomore
Gamelyn in þe place / stood as stille as stoon ·
For to abyde wrastelyng' but' þer com noon 264
Ther was noon with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more /
For he handled þe Champio*un* so wonderly sore /
Two gentil men þer were þat' yemede þe place [*leaf* 62, *back*]
Comen to Gamelyn god ȝeue him goode grace 268
And sayde to him do on / þyn hosen and þy schoon
For soþe at þis tyme þis feire is I-doon ·
And þan seyde Gamelyn so mot' I wel fare /
I haue nought' ȝet haluendel sold vp my ware / 272

Tho seyde þe Champio*u*n so brouk' I my sweere
he is a fool þat' þer of' beyeþ / þou sellest' it so deere
Tho sayde þe Frankeleyn þat' was in moche care
Felaw he seyde / why lakkest' þou his ware / 276
By seynt' Iame in Galys þat' many man haþ sought'
ȝet' it is to good cheep þat' þou hast' I-bought'
Tho þat' wardeynes were of' þat' wrastlyng'
Come and broughte Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng' 280
And seyden haue Gamelyn þe Ryng' and þe Ram
For þe best' wrasteler þat' euer here cam ·
Thus wan Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng'
And wente wiþ moche ioye home i*n* þe mornyng' 284
His broþer seih wher he cam with þe grete rowte /
And bad schitte þe gate and holde him wiþoute
The porter of' his lord was ful sore agast'
And stert' anon to þe gate and lokked it fast 288
NOw litheþ and lestneþ boþe ȝong' and olde
And ȝe schul heere gamen of' Gamelyn þe bolde
Gamelyn com þ*er*to for to haue comen In .
And þanne was it I-schet' faste wiþ a pyn 292
Than seyde Gamelyn porter vndo þe yate
For many good mannes sone stondeþ þ*er*-ate
Than answerd þe porter and swor by goddes berd
Thow ne schalt' Gamelyn come in to þis ȝerde 296
Thow lixt' sayde Gamelyn so browke I my chyn
he smot' þe wyket' wiþ his foot' and brak' awey þe pyn
The porter seyh þo it might' no better be
He sette foot' on erþe he bigan to flee 300
By my faiþ seyde Gamelyn þat' trauail is I-lore
For I am of' foot' as light as þou þough þou haddest swore
Gamelyn ouertook' þe porter and his teene wrak'
And gert' him in þe nekke þat' þe bon tobrak' 304
And took' him by þat' oon arm and þrew him in a welle [*f.* 63]
Seuen fadmen it was deep . as I haue herd telle /
whan Gamelyn þe yonge þus hadde pleyd his play
Alle þat' in þe ȝerde were drewen he*m* a way 308

þey dredden him ful sore for werkes þat he wrouȝte
And for þe faire company þat' he þider broughte
Gamelyn ȝede to þe gate / and leet' it vp wyde
he leet' in alle man*er* men þat gon i*n* wold or ryde 312
And seyde ȝe be welcome wiþouten eny greeue /
For we wiln be maistres heer / and aske no ma*n* leue /
ȝestirday I lefte / seyde ȝonge Gamelyn ·
In my broþer Seller .v. tonne of' wyn 316
I wil not' þat' þis compaignye parten a-twynne /
And ȝe wil doon aft*er* me while eny sope is þrynne
And if' my broþ*er* grucche or make foul cheere 319
Oþer for spense of' mete or drynk' þat' we spenden heere /
I am oure catour / and bere oure aller purs /
he schal haue for his grucchyng' seint' maries curs
My broþ*er* is a nygg*ou*n / I swer by cristes ore
And we wil spende largely þat' he haþ spared ȝore / 324
And who þat makeþ grucchyng' / þat' we here dwelle
he schal to þe porter in to þe draw-welle
vij. dayes and .vij. nyght' Gamelyn held his feste
with moche myrþ and solas / þat' was þer and no cheste / 328
In a litel toret his brother lay I-steke
And sey hem wasten his good but' durst' he not' speke
Erly on a mornyng' on þe viij^e day
The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way 332
Lordes seyde Gamelyn / wil ȝe so hye
Al þe wyn is not' ȝet' y-dronke so brouk' I myn ye
Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo
whan his gestes took' her leue from hi*m* for to go 336
he wold þey had leng*er* abide / and þey seyde nay
But' bitaughte Gamelyn god and good day
Thus made Gamelyn his fest' / and brought' it wel to ende
And after his gestys took' leue to wende 340

LItheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝoure tonge
And ȝe schul heere gamen of' Gamelyn þe ȝonge /
herkneþ lordynges and lesteneþ aright' [*leaf 63, back*]
whan alle gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight 344

Al þe whil þat' Gamelyn heeld his mangerye
his broþ*er* þought' on hi*m* be wreke / wiþ his treccherie
Tho Gamelyns gestes were riden and I-goon
Gamelyn stood allone frendes had he noon 348
Tho aft*er* ful soone wiþinne a litel stou*n*de
Gamelyn was I-take and ful hard I-bou*n*de
Forþ com þe fals knight' out' of' þe selleer
To Gamelyn his broþ*er* he ȝede ful neer 352
And sayde to Gamelyn who made þe so bold
For to stroye my stoor of' myn houshold
Broþer seyde Gamelyn wraþþe þe right' nouȝt'
For it is many day I-gon siþþen it was bouȝt' 356
For broþer þou hast' I-had by seynt' richer
Of' xv. plowes of' lond þis .xvj. ȝer
And of' all*e* þe beestes þou hast' forþ bred
That my fader me biquath on his deth bed 360
Of' al þis xvj. ȝeer I ȝeue þe þe prow
For þe mete and þe drynk' þat' we haue spended now /
Thanne seyde þe fals knyȝt' euel mot he the
Herkne broþer Gamelyn what' I wol ȝeue þe 364
For of my body broþer geten heir haue I noon
I wil make þe my*n* heir I swere by seint' Iohn̄
P*ar* ma foy sayd Gamelyn and if' it so be
And þou þenke as þou seyst' god ȝelde it' þe 368
No þing' wiste Gamelyn of' his broþ*er*es gyle
Therfore he him bigyled in a litel while
Gamelyn seyde he o thing/ I þe telle
Tho þou þrewe my porter in þe draw-welle 372
I swor in þat' wraþþe and in þat' grete moot'
That' þou schuldest' be bounde boþe hand and foot
Therfore I þe biseche brother Gamelyn
Lat' me nought' be forsworn broþ*er* art' þou myn 376
lat' me bynde þe now boþe hand and feet'
For to holde my*n* avow as I þe biheet
Broþ*er* sayde Gamelyn also mot I þe
Thou schalt' not' be forsworen for þe loue of' me 380

Tho made þey Gamelyn to sitte mightˡ he natˡ stonde [*leaf* 64]
Til þey had him bounde boþe footˡ and honde /
The fals knightˡ his broþer ofˡ Gamelyn was agastˡ
And sentˡ aftir feteres to feteren him fastˡ 384
His broþ*er* made lesynges on him þer he stood
And told hem þatˡ comen In þatˡ Gamelyn w*as* wood
Gamelyn stood to a postˡ bounden in þe halle /
Tho þatˡ comen in þer loked on him alle / 388
Euer stood Gamelyn euen vprightˡ
Butˡ mete ne drynkˡ had he non neiþ*er* day ne nightˡ
Than seyde Gamelyn broþer by myn hals
Now I haue aspied þou artˡ a p*ar*ty fals / 392
had I wistˡ þatˡ tres*ou*n þatˡ þou haddestˡ y-fo*un*de
I wolde haue ȝeue þe strokes or I had be bo*un*de /
Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon·
Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon 396
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þatˡ stood y-bo*un*de stronge /
Adam Spencer me þinkþ I faste to longe
Ad*a*m Spencer now I byseche þe
For þe mochel loue my fader loued þe/ 400
yfˡ þou may come to þe keyes lese me outˡ ofˡ bond
And I wil parte wiþ þe ofˡ my free lond
Thanne seyde adam þatˡ was þe Spencer
I haue serued þy broþer þis xvj. ȝeer 404
Ifˡ I leete þe goon outˡ ofˡ his bour
he wolde say aft*er*ward I were a trayto*ur*
Ad*a*m sayde Gamelyn so broukˡ I my*n* hals
þou schaltˡ fynde my broþer atte laste fals 408
Therfor broþer ad*a*m louse me outˡ ofˡ bond
And I wil parte wiþ þe ofˡ my free lond
vp swich a forward seyde adam I-wys
I wil do þ*er*to al þatˡ in me is 412
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn al so motˡ I þe
I wol hold þe coueno*un*tˡ and þou wil me
Anon as adames lord to bedde was I-goon
Adam tookˡ þe keyes and leetˡ gamelyn outˡ anoon 416

He vnlokked Gamelyn boþe hand and feet
In hope of auauncement þat he him byheet
Than seyde Gamelyn þanked be goddes sonde [*leaf 64, back*]
Now I am loosed boþe foot and honde / 420
had I now eten and dronken aright
Ther is noon in þis hous schulde bynde me þis night
Adam took Gamelyn as stille as ony stoon
And ladde him into spence rapely and anon 424
And sette him to soper right in a priue stede
he bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede
Anon as gamelyn hadde eten wel & fyn
And *þer*to y-dronke wel of þe rede wyn 428
Adam seyde Gamelyn what is now þy reed
wher I go to my broþer and girde of his heed
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m it schal not be so
I can teche þe a reed þat is worþ þe two 432
I wot wel for soþe þat þis is no nay
we schul haue a mangery right on sonday
Abbotes and p*ri*ours many heer schal be
And oþer men of holy chirche as I telle þe / 436
Thow schalt stonde vp by þe post as þou were hond-fast/
And I schal leue hem vnloke awey þou may hem cast
whan þat þey haue eten and waisschen here hondes
Thou schalt biseke hem all*e* to bryng þe out of bondes 440
And if þey wille borwe þe þat were good game
Then were þou out of prison and I out of blame
And if euerich of hem say vnto vs nay
I schal do anoþer I swere by þis day 444
Thou schalt haue a good staf and I wil haue ano*þer*
And cristes curs haue þat oon þat faileþ þat oþer
ȝe for gode sayde Gamelyn I say it for me
If I fayle on my syde yuel mot I þe 448
If we schul algate assoile hem of here synne
warne me broþer ad*a*m whan I schal bygynne
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m by seynte charite
I wil warne þe byforn whan þat it schal be 452

whan I twynk' on þe loke for to goon
And cast' awey þe fete*r*es and com to me anoon·
Adam seide Gamelyn blessed be þy bones
That' is a good counseil ȝeuyng' for þe nones 456
If þey werne me þanne to brynge me out' of' bendes [*leaf* 65]
I wol sette goode strokes right' on here lendes
Tho þe sonday was I-come and folk' to þe feste /
Faire þey were welcomed boþe lest' and meste 460
And euer as þey atte halle/ dore comen In·
They caste þeir eye on ȝonge Gamelyn
The fals knight' his broþ*er* ful of' trechery
Alle þe gestes þat' þ*er* wer atte mangery 464
Of' Gamelyn his broþ*er* he tolde hem with mouþe
Al þe harm and þe schame þat he telle couþe
Tho þey were serued Of' messes tuo oþ*er* þre
Than seyde Gamelyn how serue ȝe me 468
It' is nouȝt' wel serued by god þat al made
That' I sytte fastyng' and oþer men make glade
The fals knight' his broþ*er* þer þat' he stood
Tolde all*e* his gestes þat Gamelyn was wood 472
And Gamelyn stood stille and answerde nought'
But adames wordes he held in his þought /
Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully wiþ alle /
To þe grete lordes þat' saten in þe halle 476
lordes he seyde for cristes passio*un*
helpeþ brynge Gamelyn out' of' p*risoun*
Than seyde an abbot' sorwe on his cheeke
he schal haue cristes curs and seynte maries eeke 480
That' þe out' of' prisou*n* beggeþ oþer borwe
But euer worthe hem wel þat' doþ þe moche sorwe
After þat' abbot þan spak' anoþ*er*
I wold þin heed were of' þough þou were my broþ*er* 484
Alle þat' þe borwe / foule mot hem falle
Thus þey seyde all*e* þat' were in þe halle
Than seyde a p*ri*our yuel mot' he þryue
It' is moche skaþe boy þat' þou art' on lyue 488

Ow. seyde Gamelyn so brouk' I my bon
Now I haue aspyed þat' freendes haue I non
Cursed mot' he worþe boþe fleisch and blood
That' euer do P*ri*our or abbot ony good 492
Adam þe Spencer took' vp þe cloþ
And loked on Gamelyn and say þat' he was wroth
Ad*a*m on þe pantrye litel he þought' / [*leaf* 65, *back*]
But' tuo goode staues to hall dore he brouȝt 496
Ad*a*m loked on Gamelyn and he was war anoon
And cast' awey þe feteres and he bigan to goon
Tho he com to ad*a*m he took' þat' oo staf'
And bygan to worche and goode strokes ȝaf' 500
Gamelyn cam into þe halle and þe spencer boþe
And loked hem aboute as þey had be wroþe
Gamelyn sprengeþ holywater wiþ an Oken spire ./
That' some þat' stoode vpright' fel in þe fire 504
Ther was no lewede man þat' in þe halle stood
That' wolde do Gamelyn eny þing' but' good
But' stood besyde and leet' hem boþe werche
For þey hadde no rewþe of' men of' holy cherche 508
Abbot' or priour monk' or Chano*u*n
That' Gamelyn ou*er*tok' anon þey ȝeeden doun
Ther was non of' hem alle þat' wiþ his staf' mette
That' he made him ouerþrowe and quyt' hi*m* his dette 512
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m for seynte charite
Pay large lyuerey for þe loue of' me
And I wil kepe þe dore so euer here I masse /
Er þey ben assoyled þere schan noon passe 516
Dowt' þe nought' seyde Gamelyn whil we ben in feere
kep þou wel þe dore / and I wol werche heere
Stere þe good ad*a*m and lat þer noon flee
And we schul telle largely how many þ*er* be 520
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m do hem but good
þey ben men of' holy chirche / draw of' he*m* no blood
Saue wel þe croune and do hem non harmes
But' brek' boþe her legges and siþþen here armes 524

Thus Gamelyn and ad*a*m wroughte right' fast'
And pleyden wiþ þe monkes and made hem agast'
Thider þey come rydyng' iolily wiþ swaynes
And hom aȝen þey were I-lad in cartes and in waynes 528
Tho þey hadden al y-don þan seyde a gray frere
Allas sire abbot' what' dide we now heere
Tho þat' comen hider it was a cold reed
vs hadde ben better at' home wiþ water and breed 532
Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere / [*leaf* 66]
Euer stood his broþer and made foul chere /
Gamelyn vp wiþ his staf' þat' he wel knew
And gert/ him in þe nekke þat' he ou*er*þrew 536
Alitel aboue þe girdel þe Riggebon tobarst/
And sette him in þe feteres þer he sat' arst'
Sitte þer broþer sayde Gamelyn·
For to colyn þy blood as I dide myn 540
As swiþe as þey hadde / I-wroken hem on here foon
They askeden watir and wisschen anoon.
what' some for here loue and some for awe /
All*e* þe s*er*uantȝ serued hem of' þe beste lawe / 544
The scherreue was þennes but' a fyue myle
And al was y-told him in a litel while
How Gamelyn and ad*a*m had doon a sory rees
Bounden and I-wounded men aȝein þe kinges pees 548
Tho bigan sone strif' for to wake /
And þe scherref' aboute Gamelyn for to take /
NOw lytheþ and lestneþ so god ȝif' ȝou goode fyn
And ȝe schul heere good game of' ȝonge Gamelyn 552
Four and twenty ȝonge men þat' heelden hem ful bolde
Come to þe schirref' and seyde þat þey wolde /
Gamelyn and ad*a*m fetten away
The scherref' ȝaf' hem leue soþ as I ȝou say 556
They hyeden faste wold þey nought' bylynne /
Til þey come to þe ȝate þer Gamelyn was Inne
They knokked on þe gate þe porter was ny
And loked out at' an hol as man þat' was sly 560

The porter hadde byholde hem a litel while /
he loued wel Gamelyn and was adrad of gyle
And leet þe wyket stonden y-steke ful stylle
And asked hem wiþoute what was here wille 564
For al þe grete company þanne spak but oon
Vndo þe gate porter and lat vs in goon
Than seyde þe porter so brouke I my chyn
ȝe schul sey ȝour erand er ȝe comen In 568
Sey to Gamelyn and adam if here wille be
we wil speke wiþ hem wordes two or þre
Felaw seyde þe porter stond þere stille [leaf 66, back]
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille 572
In went þe porter to Gamelyn anoon
And seyde sir I warne ȝou her ben come ȝour foon
The scherreues meyne ben atte gate /
For to take ȝou boþe schul ȝe na skape / 576
Porter seyde Gamelyn so moot I wel þe /
I wil allowe þe þy wordes whan I my tyme se
Go agayn to þe ȝate and dwel wiþ hem a while
And þou schalt se right sone porter a gyle 580
Adam sayde Gamelyn looke þe to goon
we haue foomen atte gate and frendes neuer oon
It ben þe schirrefes men þat hider ben I-come /
They ben swore to-gidere þat we schul be nome / 584
Gamelyn seyde adam hye þe right blyue /
And if I faile þe þis day euel mot I þryue
And we schul so welcome þe scherreues men
That som of hem schul make here beddes in þe den 588
Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went /
And a good cart staf in his hand he hente
Adam hente sone anoþer gret staf
For to helpe Gamelyn and goode strokes ȝaf 592
Adam felde tweyne and Gamelyn felde þre
The oþer setten feet on erþe and bygonne fle
what seyde adam so euer here I masse
I haue a draught of good wyn / drynk er ȝe passe / 596

Nay by god sayde þay / þy drynk' is not' good
It' wolde make mannes brayn to lien in his hood
Gamelyn stood stille and loked him aboute
And seih þe scherreue come with a gret' route / 600
Adam seyde Gamelyn what' be now þy reedes
Here comþ þe scherreue and wil haue oure heedes
Adam sayde Gamelyn my reed is now þis
Abide we no lenger lest' we fare amys 604
I rede þat' we to wode goon ar þat' we be fou*n*de
Better is vs þer loos þan in town y-bounde /
Ad*a*m took' by þe hond ȝonge Gamelyn
And euerich of' hem tuo drank' a draught' of' wyn · 608
And after took' her coursers and wenten her way [*leaf* 67]
Tho fond þe scherreue nest' but non ay
The scherreue lighte a-do*u*n and went' in to þe halle /
And fond þe lord y-fetered faste wiþ alle/ 612
The scherreue vnfetered him sone and þat' anoon
And sent' after a leche to hele his rigge boon
LEte we now þis fals knigh̄t'. lyen in his care
And talke we of' Gamelyn and loke how he fare 616
Gamelyn in to þe woode stalkede stille
And ad*a*m þe Spenser liked ful ylle /
Ad*a*m swor to Gamelyn by seynt' Richer
Now I see it' is mery to be a Spencer 620
That leuer me were / keyes for to bere /
Than walken in þis wilde woode my clothes to tere /
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn dismaye þe right' nough̄t'
Many good mannes child in care is I-brought' 624
And as þey stoode talkyng' boþen in feere /
Ad*a*m herd talkyng' of' men and neyh hi*m* þought' þei were
Tho Gamelyn vnder þe woode loked aright'
vij. score of' ȝonge men he saugh wel a digh̄t' 628
Alle satte atte mete compas aboute /
Adam seyde Gamelyn now haue we no doute
After bale comeþ boote þurgh g*rac*e of' god almigh̄t'
Me þynkeþ of' mete and drynk' þat' I haue a sigh̄t 632

Ad*a*m lokede þo vnder woode bow3
And whan he seyh mete he was glad ynough
For he hopede to god for to haue his deel
And he was sore alonged after a good meel 636
As he seyde þat word þe mayster outlawe
Saugh Gamelyn and ad*a*m vnder woode schawe /
3onge men seyde þe maister by þe goode roode
I am war of gestes / god send vs non but goode 640
3onder ben tuo 3onge men wonder wel adight
And p*ar*auent*ur*e þer ben mo / who-so loked aright
Ariseþ vp 3e 3onge men and fetteþ hem to me /
It is good þat we witen what men þey bee / 644
Vp þer sterten seuene / fro þe dyner
And metten with Gamelyn and ad*a*m Spenser
whan þey were neyh hem þan seyde þat oon [*leaf* 67, *back*]
3eldeth vp 3onge men 3our bowes and 3our floon 648
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat yong was of elde
Moche sorwe mot he haue þat to 3ou hem 3elde /
I curse non oþer but right my selue
Þey 3e fette to 3ow fyue þanne 3e be twelue / 652
Tho þey herde by his word þat might was in his arm
Ther was non of hem alle / þat wolde do him harm .
But sayd vnto gamelyn myldely and stille
Com afore our maister and sey to him þy wille 656
yonge men sayde Gamelyn by 3our lewte
what man is 3our maister þat 3e wiþ be
Alle þey answerde wiþoute lesyng
Oure maister is I-crouned of outlawes kyng 660
Adam seyde Gamelyn gowe in cristes name /
he may neyþer mete ne drynk werne vs for schame /
If þat he be heende and come of gentil blood
he wol 3eue vs mete an drynk and doon vs som good 664
By seynt Iame seyd ad*a*m / what harm þat I gete /
I wil auntre to þe dore þat I hadde mete
Gamelyn and ad*a*m wente forþ in feere
And þey grette þe maister þat þey founde þere 668

Than seide þe maister kyng' of' outlawes
what' seeke ȝe ȝonge men vnder woode schawes
Gamelyn answerde þe kyng' wiþ his croune /
he moste needes walke in woode þat' may not walke in towne /
Sire we walke not' heer noon harm for to do 673
But' if' we meete wiþ a deer to scheete *þer*to /
As men þat' ben hungry and mow no mete fynde
And ben harde bystad vnder woode lynde 676
Of' Gamelynes wordes þe maist*er* hadde rouþe /
And seyde ȝe schal haue ynough haue god my trouþe /
he bad hem sitte þer adoun for to take reste / [1 ? MS. eite]
And bad hem [1]ete and drynke and þat' of' þe beste / 680
As þey sete and eeten and dronke wel and fyn ·
Than seyd þat' oon to þat' oþer / þis is Gamelyn.
Tho was þe maister outlawe in to counseil nome
And told how it was Gamelyn þat' þider was I-come / 684
Anon as he herde how it' was bifalle [*leaf* 68]
he made him maister vnder him ouer hem alle /
wiþin þe þridde wyke him com tydyng'
To þe maister outlawe þat' þo was her kyng' 688
That' he schulde come hom his pees was I-made
And of' þat' goode tydyng' he was þo ful glad
Tho seyde he to his ȝonge men soþ for to telle /
Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenger dwelle / 692
Tho was Gamelyn anon wiþoute taryyng'
Made maister outlawe and crouned her kyng'
¶ Tho was Gamelyn crouned kyng' of' outlawes
And walked a while vnder woode schawes 696
The fals knight' his broþer was scherreue and sire
And leet' his broþer endite for hate and for Ire /
Tho were his bonde-men sory and noþing' glade
whan Gamelyn her lord wolues-heed was cryed & made 700
And sente out' of' his men wher þey mig̃ht' him fynde
For to seke Gamelyn vnder woode lynde /
To telle him tydynges how þe wynd was went'
And al his good reued and his men schent 704

¶ whan þey had him founde on knees þey hem sette /
And a-doun wiþ here hood and here lord grette /
Sire wraþþe ȝou nought' for þe goode roode /
For we haue brought' ȝou tydynges but' þey be nat goode 708
Now is þy broþer scherreue and haþ þe baillye
And he haþ endited þe and wolues-heed doþ þe *crie*
¶ Allas seyde Gamelyn þat' euer I was so slak'
þat I ne hadde broke his nekke þo his Rigge brak' 712
Goþ greteþ hem wel myn housbondes and wyf'
I wol ben atte nexte schire haue god my lyf'
Gamelyn came wel redy to þe nexte schire/
And þer was his broþer boþe lord and sire / 716
Gamelyn com boldelych in to þe moot' halle
And put a doun his hood among' þe lordes all*e*
God saue ȝou all*e* lordynges þat' now here be
But' Brokebak' Scherreue euel mot' þou þe / 720
why hast' þou do me þat' schame and vilonye /
For to late endite me and wolueshеed me crye
Tho þought' þe fals knight for to ben awreke [*leaf* 68, *back*]
And leet' take Gamelyn most' he nomore speke 724
Might' þer be nomore grace but Gamelyn atte last'
was cast' in to prison and fetered ful fast'
Gamelyn haþ a broþer þat' highte sir Ote
As good a knight' and heende as mighte gon on foote 728
Anon þer ȝede a messager to þat' goode knight
And told him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight'
Anon as sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was a dight'
he was wonder sory was he no þing' light' 732
And leet' sadle a steede and þe way he nam
And to his tweyne breþ*er*en anon right' he cam
Sire seyde sire Ote to þe scherreue þo /
we ben but' thre breþ*er*en schul we neuer be mo 736
And þou hast' y-p*ri*soned þe best' of' vs alle /
Swich anoþer broþer yuel mot' him bifalle
Sire Ote seide þe fals knight' lat' be þi curs /
By god for þy wordes he schal fare þe wurs 740

To þe kynges prisoun anon he is y-nome
And þer he schal abyde til þe Iustice come /
Par de seyde sir Ote better it schal be
I bidde him to maymp*ris* þat' þou g*ra*unt' him me 744
Til þe nexte sittyng' of' delyu*er*aunce
And þanne lat' Gamelyn stande to his chaunce
Broþer in swich a forthward I take him to the /
And by þi fader soule þat' þe bygat' and me 748
But' if' he be redy whan þe Iustice sitte /
Thou schalt' bere þe Iuggeme*n*t for al þi grete witte
I g*ra*unte wel seide sir Ote þat' it' so be
Let' delyuer him anon and tak' him to me / 752
Tho was Gamelyn delyu*er*ed to sire Ote his bro*þer*
And þat' night' dwelleden þat on wiþ þat o*þer*
On þe morn seyde Gamelyn to sir Ote þe heende
Broþer he seide I moot' / forsothe fro þe wende 756
To loke how my ȝonge men leden here lyf'
whether þey lyuen in Ioie or elles in stryf'
By god seyde sire Ote / þat is a cold reed
Now I see þat al þe cark' schall fallen on myn heed 760
For whan þe Iustice sitte and þou be nought' I-fo*u*nde
I schal anon be take and in þy stede I-bounde / [*leaf* 69]
Broþer sayde Gamelyn dismaye þe nought
For by seint Iame in gales þat' many man haþ sought' 764
If' þat' god almighty hold my lyf' and witt
I wil be þer redy whan þe Iustice sitt
Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn god schilde þe fro schame
Com whan þou seest' tyme / and bring' vs out' of' blame / 768
LItheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝou stille /
And ȝe schul here how Gamelyn had al his wille /
Gamelyn wente aȝein vnder woode Rys
And fond þere pleying' ȝonge men of' prys 772
Tho was ȝonge Gamelyn glad & bliþe ynough
whan he fond his mery men vnder woode bough
Gamelyn and his men talked in feere /
And þey hadde good game here maister to heere 776

They tolden him of' auentures þat þey hadde fo*u*nde /
And Gamelyn hem tolde aȝein how he was fast' I-bounde
whil Gamelyn was outlawed had he no cors
There was no man þat' for him ferde þe wors 780
But' abbotes and priours monk' and Chano*u*n
On hem left' he no þing' whan he might' hem nom
whil Gamelyn and his men made merþes ryue
The fals knight' his broþer yuel mot' he þryue / 784
For he was fast' about' boþe day and oþer
For to hyre þe quest' to hangen his broþer
Gamelyn stood on a day and as he biheeld
The woodes and þe schawes in þe wilde feeld 788
he þought' on his broþer how he him beheet'
That' he wolde be redy whan þe Iustice seet
he þoughte wel þat he wolde wiþoute delay
Come afore þe Iustice to kepen his day 792
And seide to his ȝonge men dighteþ ȝou ȝare /
For whan þe Iustice sitt' we moote be þare /
For I am vnder borwe til þat' I come /
And my broþer for me to priso*u*n schal be nome / 796
By seint' Iame seyde his ȝonge men and þou rede þ*er*to
Ordeyne how it schal be and it schal be do /
whil Gamelyn was comyng' þer þe Iustice sat/
The fals knight' his broþ*er* forȝat' he nat' þat' [*leaf* 69, *back*] 800
To huyre þe men on his quest' to hangen his broþ*er*
Though he hadde nought' þat' oon he wolde haue þat' oþ*er*
Tho cam Gamelyn fro vnder woode Rys
And broughte wiþ him / his ȝonge men of' prys 804
¶ I se wel seyde Gamelyn þe Iustice is sette
Go aforn ad*a*m and loke how it spette /
Ad*a*m went' i*n* to þe halle and loked al aboute
he seyh þere stonde lordes gret and stoute / 808
And sir Ote his broþer fetered wel fast'
þo went' ad*a*m out' of' halle as he were agast'
Ad*a*m said to Gamelyn and to his felaws all*e*
Sir Ote stant' I-fetered in þe moot' hall*e* 812

ȝonge men seide Gamelyn þis ȝe heeren alle
Sir Ote stant' I-fetered in þe moot halle
If' God ȝif' vs grace wel for to doo
he schal it' abegge þat' broughte *þertoo* 816
Thanne sayde ad*a*m þat lokkes hadde hore /
Cristes curs most' he haue þat' him bond so sore
And þou wilt' Gamelyn do after my red
Ther is noon in þe halle schal bere a-wey his heed 820
Adam seyde Gamelyn we wilne nought' don so /
we wil slee þe giltyf' and lat' þe oþer go
I wil in to þe halle /and wiþ þe Iustice speke /
On hem þat' ben gultyf' I wil ben a-wreke 824
lat' non skape at þe dore take ȝonge men ȝeme /
For I wil be Iustice þis day domes to deme
God spede me þis day at' my newe werk'
Adam com on *with* me / for þou schalt' be my clerk' 828
His men answereden hi*m* and bad him doon his best'
And if þou to vs haue neede þou schalt' fynde vs p*rest'*
we wiln stande with þe whil þat' we may dure
And but we werke manly pay vs non hure / 832
yonge men seyde Gamelyn so mot' I wel þe
As trusty a maister ȝe schal fynde of' me /
Right' þere þe justice sat' in þe halle
In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle 836
¶ Gamelyn leet/ vnfetere his broþ*er* out' of' beende
Thanne seyde sir Ote his broþer þat' was heende [*leaf* 70]
Thou haddest' almost' Gamelyn dwelled to longe
For þe quest' is oute on me þat' I schulde honge 840
Broþer seyde Gamelyn so god ȝif' me good rest'
This day þey schuln ben hanged þat' ben on þy quest'
And þe Iustice boþe þat' is Iugges man
And þe scherreue boþe þurgh̄ him it' bigan 844
Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
Now is þy power y-don þou most' nedes arise
Thow hast' ȝeuen domes þat' ben yuel dight'
I wil sitten in þy sete an dressen hem aright' 848

The Iustice sat' stille and roos nought' anoon
And Gamelyn cleuede his cheeke boon
Gamelyn took' hi*m* in his arm and no more spak'
But' þrew him ouer þe barre and his arm tobrak' 852
Durste non to Gamelyn seye but' good
For fered of' þe company þat wiþoute stood
Gamelyn sette him doun in þe Iustices sete /
And sire Ote his bro*þer* by him / and ad*am* at his feet' 856
whan Gamelyn was I-set' in þe Iustices sete
herkneþ of' a bourde þat Gamelyn dede /
he leet' fetre þe Iustice and his fals bro*þer*
And dede hem come to þe barre þat' oon wiþ þat' o*þer* 860
Tho Gamelyn hadde þus y-doon had he no rest
Til he had enquered who was on þe quest'
For to deme his bro*þer* s*ir* Ote for to honge /
Er he wiste which þey were he þoughte ful longe 864
But as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher þey were
he dede hem euerichone fetere in feere /
And bringen hem to þe barre and sette hem in rewe /
By my faiþ seyde þe Iustice þe Scherreue is a schrewe 868
Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
Thou hast' y-ȝeue domes of' þe wors assise
And þe .xij. sisours þat' weren of' þe queste /
They schul ben hanged þis day so haue I reste 872
Thanne seide þe scherreue to ȝonge Gamelyn ·
Lord I crie þe mercy bro*þer* art' þou myn
Therfore seyde Gamely haue þou c*ris*tes curs
For and þou were maister ȝit I schulde haue wors [*Uf* 70, *bk*] 876
For to make schort' tale and nouȝt' to tarie longe
he ordeyned him a queste of' his men so stronge
The Iustice and þe scherreue boþe honged hye
To weyuen wiþ ropes and wiþ þe wynd drye 880
And þe .xij. sisours sorwe haue þat' rekke
Alle þey were hanged faste by þe nekke /
Thus ended þe fals knight' wiþ his treccherie
That' euer had I-lad his lyf' in falsnes and folye 884

He was hanged by þe nek' and nouȝt' by þe purs
That' was þe meede þat' he had for his fadres curs
Sir Ote was eldest' and Gamelyn was ȝing'
þey wenten wiþ here freendes euen to þe kyng' 888
They made pees wiþ þe kyng' of' þe best' assise
The kyng' loued wel sir Ote and made him Iustise
And after þe kyng' made Gamelyn boþe in Est' and west
Chef' Iustice of' al his fre forest' 892
Alle his wighte ȝonge men þe kyng' forȝaf' here gilt'
And sitthen in good office þe kyng' hem hath I-pilt'
Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede 895
And wrak' him of' his enemys and quyt' hem here meede
And sire Ote his broþ*er* made him his heir
And siþþen wedded Gamelyn a wyf' boþe good and feyr
They lyueden to-gidere / whil þat crist' wolde
And siþen was Gamelyn grauen vnder molde 900
And so schal we alle may þer no man fle
God bryng' vs to þe Ioye þat' euer schal be / A M E N

[*The rest of the page, eleven lines, is blank in the MS.*]

GROUP B. (FRAGMENT II.)

§ 1. MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

Owre Hoste sawh̄ þat' þe brighte sonne [*leaf* 71]
The arke of' his artificial day haþ I-ronne
The fourþe p*art*' of' half' an hour and more /
And þough̄ he were nat' depe in lore 4
he wist' it was þe þrettenþe day
Of' april þat' is messanger to may
And sawe wel þat' þe schade of' euery tree
was in þe lengthe þe same q*ua*ntite 8
That' was þe body erecte þat' caused it
And þ*er*fore by þe schadwe he took' his wit'
That' Phebus which þat' schoon so fair and bright'
Degrees was .xlv. clombe on high̄t' 12
And for þat' day as in þat' latitude
Hit' was ten of' þe clokke he gan conclude /
And sodeynly he plight' his hors aboute
LOrdynges q*uo*d he I warne ȝou al þe route 16
The fourþe party of' þis day is goon
Now for þe loue of' god and of' seint' Ion
leseþ no tyme as forþe as ȝe may
lordynges þe tyme passeþ night' and day 20
And steliþ fro vs what' pryuely slepyng'
And what' þurgh̄ necligence in oure wakyng'
As doþ þe streem þat' torneþ neuer agayn
Descendyng' fro þe mounteyn in to playn 24
wel can senek' and many philosopher
Bywaylen tyme more þan gold in cofre
For losse of' catel may recouered be /
But' losse of' tyme schendeth vs q*uo*d he 28

It' wil nat' come agayn wiþoute drede
Nomore þan wol malkyns maydenhede
whan sche had lost' it in hir wantownesse /
let' vs nat' mowlen þus in ydelnesse 32
SIr man of' lawe q*uo*d he so haue ȝe blisse
Telle vs a tale anon as forward ys
ȝe be submitted þurgh̃ our fre assent/
To stonden in þis cas at' my Iuggement 36
Acquyteþ ȝow and holdeþ ȝoure byheste /
Than haue ȝe doon ȝour deuour atte leste
HOst' q*uo*d he dep*ar*deux I assent' [*leaf* 71, *back*]
To breke forward is nat' myn entent/ 40
Byheste is dette and I wol holde fayn
Al my byhest' I can no better sayn
For such lawe as a man ȝeueth anoþ*er* wight'
he schuld him selue vsen hit' by right' 44
Thus wol oure text' but naþeles certeyn
I can right' now non oþ*er* tale seyn
That' Chaucer þey he can but' lewedly
On metres and on Rymyng' certeynly 48
Haþ seyd hem in such englisch as he can
Of' olde tyme as knoweþ many man
And ȝif' he haue nouȝt' sayd hem leeue brother
In O bok' he haþ seyd hem in anoþ*er* 52
For he haþ told of' louers vp and do*un*
Moo þan Ovide made of' mencio*un*
In his Epistelles þat' ben so olde
what' schuld I tellen hem syn þey be tolde / 56
In ȝouþe he made of' Coys and alcio*un*
And siþþe haþ he spoke of' eu*er*ychon
These noble wyfes and þese louers eeke
who-so wole his large volume seeke 60
Cleped þe seintes legendes of' Cupide
Ther may he see þe large woundes wyde
Of' lucresse and of' Babilo*un* Tysbee
Thē sorwe of' Dido for þe fals Ence 64

The tree of' philles for hir demephon
The pleynt' of' Dyane and of' Ermyon
Of' Adrian and of' ysyphilee
The barren yle stondyng' in þe see / 68
The dreynt' leander' for hir Erro
The teeres of' Eleyn and eek' þe woo
Of' bryxseyde and of' ledomia
The cruelte of' þe queen Medea 72
The litel children hangyng' by þe hals
For þilke Iason þat' was of' loue so fals
O ypermystre penollope and alceste /
ȝoure wyfhood he comendeth wiþ þe beste 76
But' certeynly no worde writeþ he [leaf 72]
Of' þilke wikked ensample of' Canace
That' loued hir owen broþer synfully
On whiche corsed stories I seye fy 80
Or elles of' Tyro appoloneus
how þat' þe cursed kyng' Anteochus
Byreft' his doughter of' hir maydenhede
That' is so horrible a tale as man may reede 84
whan he hir þrew vpon þe pament'
And þerfore he of' ful auysement
wolde neuer wryte in non of' his sermouns
Of' such vnkynde abhominaciouns 88
Ne I wol non reherse if' þat' I may
But' of' my tale how schal I do þis day
Me were loth to be lykned douteles /
To muses þat men clepen Pyerides 92
Methamorphoseos wot' what' I mene
But' naþeles I recche nat a bene
They I come after him with hawe-bake /
I speke in prose[1] and let' him rymes make 96
And wiþ þat' word he wiþ a sobre cheere
Bygan his tale as ȝe schal after heere ¶ Explicit' prologus

[*No break in the MS.*]

[1] Was *Melibe* first meant for the Man of Law?

[*The Proem*]

incipit fabula /

O Hateful harm condicion of pouert [*on leaf* 72] 99
wiþ þurst wiþ cold wiþ honger so confoundyd
To asken help it schameþ in þin hert
If þou non aske wiþ neede so art þou woundyd
That verray neede vnwrappeþ al þy wou*n*des hyd
Maugre þyn heed þou most for Indigence
Or stele or begge or borwe þy dispence 105

Thow blamest crist and seyst ful bitterly 106
he mys departeþ riches temporal
And þyn neyhebour þou wytes synfully
And seyst þou hast to litel and he haþ al 109
P*ar*fay seystow som tyme he rekne schal
whan þat his tayl schal brennen in þe gleede
For he nought helpeþ þe needful in his neede 112

HErkneþ what is þe sentens of þe wyse 113
Bet is to dye þan haue indigence
Thy selue neyghebour wol þe despyse [*leaf* 72, *back*]
If þou be pore far wel þy reuerence 116
ȝet of þe wyse man tak þis sentence
Alle þe dayes of pore men be wikke /
Be war þ*er*fore or þou come to þat prikke / 119

ȝif þou be pore þy broþer hateþ þe 120
And alle þy frendes fleeþ fro þe allas
O Riche marcha*un*dȝ ful of wele be ȝe
O noble prudent folk as in þis cas 123
ȝoure bagges beþ nat fuld wiþ ambes aas
But wiþ sys synk þat renneþ on ȝour chaunce
At crystemasse wel mery may ȝe daunce 126

SIX-TEXT 133

GROUP **B.** § **2.** MAN OF LAW'S TALE. **Harleian 7334.** 159

Ȝe seeke land and see for ȝour wynnynges 127
As wyse folk[1] as ȝe knowe alle þastates
Of[1] regnes / ȝe be fadres of[1] tydynges
Of[1] tales boþe of[1] pees and of[1] debates / 130
I were right[1] now of[1] tales desolat
Nere þat[1] a marchaunt[1] gon siþþen many a ȝere /
Me taught[1] a tale which ȝe schal after heere 133

[*The Tale*]

IN Surrie dwelled whilom a companye [on lf 72, bk] 134
Of' Chapmen riche and þ*er*to sad and trewe
That' wyde where sent' her spycere
Cloþes of' gold and satyn rich of' hewe / 137
her chaffar was so þrifty and so newe
That' euery wight' had deynte to chaffare
wiþ hem and eek' to selle hem of' here ware / 140

Now fel it' þat' þe maystres of' þat' sort' 141
han schapen hem to Rome for to wende
were it for chapma*n*hode or for disport'
Non oþer message nolde þey þider sende / 144
But' came hemself' to Rome þis is þe ende
And in such place /as þought' hem auanntage
For here entent' þey tooke her herburgage 147

Soiourned naue þese marcha*u*nt3 in þe toun 148
A certeyn tyme as fel to here plesaunce
But' so bifell þat' þexcellent renoun
Of' þemp*er*oures dought*er* dame Custa*u*nce 151
Reported was with euery circumsta*u*nce
vnto þese surrien3 marchaunt3 in such wyse [leaf 73]
Fro day to day as I schal 3ou deuyse / 154

This was þe comyn voys of' eu*er*y man 155
Oure emp*er*our of' Rome god him see
A doughter haþ þat' siþ þe world bygan
To Rekne as wel hir goodnes as hir bewte / 158
Nas neuer such anoþer as was sche
I prey to god hir saue and susteene
And wolde sche were of' al Europe þe queene 161

In hire is hye bewte wiþoute pryde 162
ȝowþe wiþoute grefhed or folye
To alle here werkes vertu is hire gyde /
humblesse haþ slayne in hir tyrrannye / 165
Sche is myrour of alle curtesye /
hir herte is verrey chambre of holynesse
hir hond mynistre of fredom and almesse 168

And al þis voys is soþ as god is trewe 169
But now to purpos let vs turne aȝein
These marchantȝ haue don fraught here schippes newe /
And whan þey haue þis blisful mayde seyn · 172
Home to Surrey be þey went aȝein /
And doon here needes as þey haue don ȝore
And lyuen in wele I can ȝou say no more / 175

Now fel it þat þese marchaunt ȝ stooden in grace / 176
Of him þat was þe Sowdan of Surrye
For whan þey come fro eny straunge place /
he wolde of his benigne curtesye 179
Make hem good chere and busily aspye
Tydynges of sondry regnes for to lere/
The wordes þat þey mighte seen and heere / 182

Among oþer þinges specially 183
These marchaunt ȝ him told of dame Constaunce
So gret noblesse in ernest so ryally
That þis Sowdan haþ caught so gret plesaunce 186
To haue hir figure in his remembraunce
And al his lust and al his besy cure
was for to loue hir whiles his lyf may dure 189

Par auenture in þilke large booke / 190
which þat is cleped þe heuen I-write was [leaf 73, back]
wiþ sterres whan þat he his burþe took
That he for loue schulde haue his deþ allas / 193

For in þe sterres clerere þen is glas /
Is wryten god woot' who-so cowþe it rede
The deþ of' euery man wiþouten drede 196

IN sterres many a wynter þer byfore 197
was write þe deþ of' Ector and Achilles /
Of' Pompe Iulius er þey were I-bore /
The stryf' of' Thebes and of' Ercules / 200
Of' Sampson Turnus and of' Socrates
The deþ but' mennes wittes ben so dulle /
That' no wight' can wel rede it at' þe fulle 203

This sowdan for his pryue counseil sent' 204
And schortly of' þis mater for to pace /
he haþ to hem declared his entent'
And seyd hem certeyn but' he might' haue grace / 207
To haue Constance wiþinne a litel space
he nas but' deed and charged hem in hyȝe
To schapen for his lyf' som remedye 210

Dyuerse men dyuers þinges seyde 211
The argumentes casten vp and doun
Many a subtyl resoun forþ þey leyden
They spekyn of' magike and of' ambusio*un* 214
But' finally as in conclusio*un*
They can nought' seen in þat non auauntage
Ne in non oþer wey saue in mariage 217

Than sawgh þey þer in such difficulte 218
By wey of' reso*un* to speke it' al playn ·
By cause þat' þer was such dyuersite /
Bitwen here boþe lawes as þey sayn 221
They trowe þat' no cristen p*r*ince wold fayn
wedden his child vnder our lawe swete /
That' vs was taught' by mahoun oure p*ro*phete / 224

And he answerde raþer þan I lese 225
Constance I wol be cristen douteles /
I moot' be heres I may non oþer cheese /
I pray ȝou haldeth ȝour arguments in pees / 228
Saueþ my lyf' and beþ nat' recheles / [leaf 74]
Goþ geteþ hire þat' haþ my lyf' in cure /
For in þis wo I may no lenger dure / 231

What' needeþ gretter dilatacio*un* 232
I say by tretys and ambassatrye
And by þe popes mediacio*un*
And al þe chirche and al þe chyualrye / 235
That' in destruccio*un* of' mawmetrye
And in encresse of' cristes lawe deere /
They ben acordid as ȝe schal aft*er* heere/ 238

How þat' þe Soudan and his baronage 239
And all*e* his lieges schuld I-crystned be /
And he schal haue Constance in mariage/
And certeyn gold I not' what' q*ua*ntite 242
And þ*er*fore founden þey suffisant' seurte
This same acord was sworn on eu*er*y syde/
Now fair Constance almighty god þe guyde / 245

Now wolde som men wayten as I gesse 246
That' I schulde tellen al þe puruya*un*ce /
That' þemp*er*our' of' his gret' noblesse /
Haþ schapen for his doughter dame Constaunce / 249
wel may men knowe þat' so gret' ordyna*un*ce
May no man telle in so litel a clause /
As was arrayed for so high a cause / 252

Bisschops ben schapen with hir for to wende 253
lordes ladyes and knightes of' renoun
And oþer folk' ynowe þis þis is þe ende
And notefied is þurgh out þe toun 256

That' euery wigħt' wiþ gret' deuocioun
Schulde preye crist þat' he þis mariage
Receyue in gree and spede þis viage 259

The day is come of' hire departyng' 260
I say þe woful day þat' þan is come
That' þer may be no lenger tarryyng'
But' forþeward þey dresse hem alle & some / 263
Constance þat' with sorwe is ouercome
Ful pale arist' and dresseþ hir to wende /
For wel sche saugħ þer nas non oþer ende 266

Allas what' wonder is it/ þougħ sche wepte [leaf 74, back] 267
That' schal be sent' to straunge nacioun
Fro freendes þat' so tenderly hir kepte /
And to be bounde vndur subieccioun 270
Of' oon sche knew nat' his condicioun
Housbondes ben al goode and han be ȝore
That' knowen wyfes I dar say no more / 273

Fader scne seid þy wrecched child Costaunce 274
Thy ȝonge doughter fostred vp so softe /
And ȝe my mooder my souerayn plesaunce
Ouer al þing' outaken crist on lofte / 277
Constaunce ȝour child hir recomaundeth ofte
Vnto ȝour grace / for I schal in to Surrye
Ne schal I neuer see ȝou more wiþ ye 280

Allas vnto þe barbre nacioun 281
I most' anoon / seþens it' is ȝour wille
But' crist' þat' starf' for our redempcioun
So ȝeue me grace his hestes to fulfille / 284
I wrecched womman no fors þey I spille /
wommen ben born to þraldam and penaunce
And to ben vnder mannes gouernaunce 287

I trowe at' Troye whan Pirrus brak' þe wal 288
Or yleon þat' brend Thebes þe Citee
Ne at' Rome for þe harme þurgh hanibal
That' Romayns han venquysshed tymes þre 291
Nas herd such tender wepyng' for pite
As in þe Chambur was for hir partyng'
But' forþ sche moot' wheþer sche weep or syng 294

O firste meuyng' cruel firmament 295
with þi diurnal swough þat' crowdest' ay
And hurlest' al fro Est' to Occident
That' naturelly wold hold anoþer way 298
Thyn crowdyng' sette þe heuen in such array
At' þe bygynnyng' of' þis fiers viage
That' cruel marcȝ haþ slayn þis marriage 301

Infortunat ascendent tortuous 302
Of' which þe lordes helples falle allas
Out' of' his angle in to þe derkest' hous
O . Mariȝ atteȝere as in þis caas [*leaf* 75] 305
O feble moone vnhappy been þi paas /
Thou knettest' þe þer þou art' nat' receyued
Ther þou were wel fro þennes artow weyued 308

Inprudent' Emperour of' Rome allas 309
was þer no philosopher in al þy toun
Is no tyme bet' þan oþer in such caas
Of' viage is þer noon eleccioun 312
Namly to folk' of' heigh condicioun
Nought' whan a roote is of' a birthe I-knowe
Allas we ben to lewed and eek' to slowe / 315

[[1] To Shipe] is brought' þis woful faire mayde / [[1] *In a later hand.*]
Solempnely with euery circumstaunce /
Now Ihū crist' so be wiþ ȝou sche sayde /
Ther nys nomor but' far wel fair Custaunce 319

She peyneth hire to make good contienaunce
And forþ I lete hire sayle in þis manere /
And torne I wol aȝein to my matiere / 322

The moder of' þe Sawdan ful of' vices 323
Aspyed haþ hir sones playn entent/
how he wol lete his olde sacrifices
And right' anoon sche for hir counseil sent' 326
And þey ben come to knowe what' sche ment
And whan assembled was þis folk' in fere
Sche sette hir doun and sayd as ȝe schal heere / 329

Lordes quod sche ȝe knowen euerichon 330
how þat' my sone in poynt' is for to lete
The holy lawes of' our alkaroñ
ȝe ben goddes messangere makamete / 333
But' oon avow to grete god I hete
The lyf' schuld raþer out' of' my body stert'
Or makametes law go out' of' myn hert' 336

What schal vs tyden of' þis newe lawe 337
But' þraldam to oure body and penaunce
And afterward in helle to be drawe /
For we reneyed mahound oure creaunce 340
But' lordes wol ȝe maken assuraunce
As I schal say assentyng' to my lore
And I schal make vs sauf' for euermore [leaf 75, back] 343

They sworen and assenten euery man 344
To lyf' wiþ hir and dye and by hir stonde
And euerich in þe beste wise he can
To strengþen hir schal al his frendes fonde 347
And sche haþ Emperise take on honde
which ȝe schul heere þat' I schal deuyse /
And to hem alle sche spak' in þis wyse / 350

We schul first' feyne ous cristendom to take 351
Cold watir schal nat' greue vs but a lite /
And I schal such a fest' and Reuel make /
That' as I trow I schal þe Sowdan quyte 354
For þough his wyf' be cristned neuer so white
Sche schal haue need to waissche away þe rede
They sche a font of' watir wiþ hir lede 357

O Sowdones root' of' iniquite 358
Virago þou Semyram þe secounde
O serpent' vnder feminite
Lyk' to þe serpent' deep in helle I-bounde 361
O feyned wo*m*man alle þat' may confounde
Vertu and Innocence þurgh þy malice /
Is bred in þe as nest' of' euery vice 364

O Satan enuyous syn þilke day 365
That' þou were chased fro oure heritage
wel knewest' þou to wo*m*men þe olde way
Thou madest' Eue to bryng' vs in seruage 368
Thou wolt' fordoon þis cristen mariage
Thyn instrum*e*nt so weylaway þe while
Makestow of' wo*m*men whan þou wolt' bygile 371

This Sawdones whom I þus blame and wary 372
let pryuely hir counseil gon his way
what' schuld I in þis tale lenger tary
Sche rideþ to þe Soudan on a day 375
And seyd him þat sche wold reney hir lay
And cristendam of' prestes handes fonge
Repentyng' hir sche hethen was so longe 378

Bysechyng' him to doon hir þat' honour 379
That' sche most' haue þe cristen men to feste /
To plesen hem I wil do my labour [leaf 76]
The sawdan seith I wol do at' ȝour heste 382

And knelyng' þankeþ hir of' þat' requeste
So glad he was he nyst nat what' to seye
Sche kyst' hir sone and hom sche goþ hir weye 385

[*PART II.*]

Arryued ben þe cristen folk' to londe / 386
In Surry with a gret' solempne route
And hastily þis soudan sent' his sonde
First' to his moder and al þe regne aboute 389
And seyd his wyf' was comen out' of' doute
And preyeþ hir for to ride aȝein þe queene
The honour of' his regne to susteene / 392

Gret' was þe prees and riche was tharray 393
Of' Surriens and Romayns mette in feere
The moodur of' þe Sowdan riche and gay
Receyued hir with al so glad a cheere 396
As eny modir mig̃ht' hir doughter deere
And to þe nexte Citee þer bysyde
A softe paas solempnely þay ryde 399

Nough̃t' trow I þe triumphe of' Iulius 400
Of' which þat lukan makeþ moche bost'
was ryaller ne more curious
Than was thassemble of' þis blisful oost' 403
But' þis Scorpio*un* þis wikked goost'
This Sowdones for al hir flateryng'
Cast' vnder þis ful mortally to styng' 406

The Sawdan comþ himself' sone aft*er* þis 407
So really þat' wonder is to telle
And welcomeþ hir wiþ ioy and blys
And þus with myrth and ioy I let' hem dwelle 410

The fruyt' of' þis matier is þat' I telle
whan tyme com men þought it for þe best
That' reuel stynt' and men goon to her rest' 413

The tyme com þe olde Sowdonesse 414
Ordeyned haþ þis fest' of' which I told
And to þe feste cristen folk' he*m* dresse
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 417
Ther men may fest' and realte byholde
And deyntes mo / þan I can of' deuyse
But' al to deere þey bought' it' ar þey ryse [*leaf* 76, *back*] 420

O sodeyn wo þat' euer art' successour 421
¶ To worldly blis spreynd is wiþ bitternesse /
The ende of' oure ioye of' oure worldly labour
wo occupieth þe fyn of' oure gladnesse 424
herken þis counseil for thyn sikernesse
vpon þyn glade dayes haue in þi mynde
The vnwar woo þat' cometh ay bihynde 427

For schortly for to tellen at o word 428
The Sawdan and þe cristen eu*er*ichone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord
But' it' were Dame Constaunce allone 431
This olde Sowdones þis cursed crone
haþ wiþ hir frendes doon þis cursed dede
For sche hir self' wold al þe contre lede 434

Ne þer was surrien noon / þat was conuerted 435
That' of' þe counseil of' þe Sawdon woot
That' he nas alto-hewe or he asterted
And Constaunce haue þey take anon foot-hoot' 438
And in a schippe / steleres god it woot
They haue hir set'. and bad hir lerne to sayle
Out' of' Surry aȝeinward to ytaile 441

A certein tresour þat sche þider ladde 442
And soþ to sayn vitaile gret plente
They haue hir ȝeuen and cloþes eek sche hadde
And forþ sche sayleþ to þe salte see 445
O my Constaunce ful of benignite
O Emp*er*oures ȝonge doughter deere
he þat is Lord of fortun be þi steere 448

Sche blesseþ hir and with ful pitous voys 449
Vnto þe croys of crist þan seyde sche
O cler o welful auter holy croys
Rood of þe lambes blood ful of pite 452
That wisſh þe world fro old iniquite
Me fro þe feend and fro his clowes keepe
That day þat I schal drenchen in þe deepe 455

Victorious tre proteccio*u*n of trewe 456
That oonly were worthy for to bere
That kyng of heuen with his woundes newe [*leaf* 77]
The white lamb þat hurt was with a spere 459
Flemer of feendes out of him and here /
On which þy lymes feithfully extenden
Me kepe and ȝif me might my lyf to menden 462

Ȝeres and dayes flette þis creature 463
Thurghout þe see of Grece in to þe strayte
Of Marrok as it was hir aduenture /
O many a sory mele may sche bayte 466
After hir deth ful / ofte may sche wayte
Or þat þe wilde wawe wol hir dryue
Vnto þe place þer as sche schal arryue 469

Men mighten aske why sche was nouȝt slayn 470
Ek at þe fest. who might hir body saue
And I answered that demaunde agayn
who saued Daniel / in thorrible Caue 473

That' euery wight' sauf' he mayster or knaue
was wiþ þe lioun frete or he asterte
No wight' but' god þat' he bar in his herte 476

God lust' to schewe his wondurful miracle 477
In hir for sche schuld seen his mighty werkes
Crist' which þat is to euery harm triacle
By certeyn menes ofte as knowen clerkes 480
Doth þing' for certeyn ende þat ful derk' is //
To mannes witt / þat' for our ignoraunce
Ne can nought' knowe his prudent puruyaunce 483

Now sith sche was nat' at' þe fest' I-slawe / 484
who kepte hir fro drenching' in þe see /
who kepte Ionas in þe fisches mawe
Til he was spouted vp at Niniue 487
wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
That' kept' þe pepul Ebrayk' fro her drenchyng'
wiþ drye feet' / þurghout þe see passyng' 490

Who hadde foure spirit3 of' tempest' 491
That' power han to noyen land and see
Boþe norþ and souþ and also west' and Est'
Anoyeþ neyþer londe / see ne tree / 494
Soþly þe comaunder of' þat' was he
That' fro þe tempest' ay þis womman kepte [*leaf 77, back*]
As wel when sche awok' as when sche slepte 497

Wher might' þis womman mete and drinke haue / 498
Thre 3er and more / how lasteþ hir vitaille
who fedde þe Egipcien marie in þe Caue
Or in desert' no wight' but' crist' saun3 faile 501
Fyf' þousand folk' / it' was a gret meruaile/
wiþ loues fyf' and fissches tuo to feede
God sent' his foysoun at' her grete neede 504

Sche dryueþ forþ in to oure Occean 505
Thurghout' oure wilde see til atte last'
vnder an holte þat men nempne can
Fer in Northu*m*berland þe wawe hir cast' 508
And in þe sand þe schip styked so fast'
That' þennes wold it nouȝt' in al a tyde
The wille of' crist' was þat' sche schold abyde 511

The Constabil of' / þe castel dou*n* is fare / 512
To se þis wrak' / and al þe schip he sought'
And fond þis wery wo*m*man ful of' care
And fand also þe tresour þat' sche brought' 515
In hir langage mercy sche bisought'
The lif' out' of' her body for to wynne
hir to delyuer of' woo þat' sche was Inne / 518

A maner latyn corupt' was hir speche 519
But' algates / þer by sche was vnderstonde
The constabil whan him lust' no lenger seche
This woful wo*m*man brought̃e he to londe / 522
Sche kneleþ doun and thanketh goddes sonde
But' what' sche was sche wolde no man seye
For foul ne faire / þough sche scholde deye 525

Sche was sche seyd so mased in þe see 526
That' sche forgat' hir mynde by hir*e* trowþe /
The constable had of' hir so gret' pitee
And eek' his wyf' þey wepeden for routhe 529
Sche was so diligent' wiþouten slouþe /
To serue and plese euer in þat place
That' alle hir louen þat' loken on hir face 532

The Constable and dame hermegyld his wyf' 533
To telle ȝou playne in peynes boþe were [*leaf* 78]
But hermegyld loued constance as hir lyf'
And Constance haþ so long' herberwed þere 536

In orisoun wiþ many a bitter teere /
Til ihū haþ conuerted þurgh̄ his grace
Dame hermegyld þe Constables wif' of' þe place 539

In al þe lond no cristen men durst' route 540
Al cristen men ben fled from þat contre
Thurgh̄ payens þat conquered al a-boute /
The places of' þe north by land and see 543
To wales fled þe cristianite
Of' olde britouns dwellyng' in þis yle /
Ther was hir refut' for þe mene while 546

But/ ȝit nere cristen britouns so exiled 547
That' þer / nere some in here pryuite /
honoured crist' and heþen men bygiled
And neigh þe Castel such þer dwellid þre 550
That' oon of' hem was blynd and might nat' se /
But if' it were wiþ eyen of' his mynde
wiþ which men seen after þat þey ben blynde 553

Bright' was þe sonne as in someres day 554
For which þe constable and his wif' also
And Constaunce had take þe righte way
Toward þe see a forlong' wey or two 557
To pleyen and to Romen to and fro
And in þat/ walk' the blynde men þey mette
Croked and olde with eyen fast' y-schette 560

In name of' crist' / cryed þis old britoun 561
Dame hermegyld ȝif' me my sight aȝeyn
This lady wax affrayed of' þe soun
lest' þat' hir houseband schortly to sayn 564
wold hir for ihū cristes loue haue slayn
Til Constaunce made hir bold and bad hir werche
The wil of' crist' as douȝter of' holy chirche 567

The Constable wax abaisshed of' þat sight' 568
And sayde what amounteþ al þis fare
Constaunce answered / sir it is cristes might
That' helpeth folk' out' of' þe feendes snare / 571
And so ferforþ sche gan hir lay declare/ [*leaf 78, back*]
That' sche þe Constable er þat' it' was Eue
Conuerted and on crist' made him bileue 574

This Constable was no þing' lord of' þe place 575
Of' which I speke þer he Constance fond
But' kept' it strongly many a wynter space
vnder alla kyng' of' Northumberlond 578
That' was ful wys and worþy of' his hond
Azein þe scottes as men may wel heere
But' tourne azein I wil to my mateere 581

Satan þat' euer vs wayteþ to begile / 582
Sawe of' Constaunce þe persecucioun
And cast' anoon how he mighť quyt' hir while /
And made a zong' knighť þat' dwelt' in þe toun 585
Loue hir so hoot of' foul affeccioun
That' verrayly him þouzt' he schulde spille
But' he of' hire / oones had his wille 588

He wowith hir but' it' avayleþ nought' 589
Sche wolde do no synne by no weye
And for despyt / he compassed in his þought'
To maken hir a schamful deþ to deye 592
he wayteth whan þe Constable was aweye
And pryuyly vpon a nyght' he crepte
In hermyngyldes chambre whil sche slepte / 595

Wery forwaked in here Orisoun 596
Slepeþ Constaunce and hermyngyld also
This knighť þurgh Satanas temptacioun
Al softely is to þe bed y-go 599

And kutte þe þrote of hermegild a two /
And leyd þe bloody knyf/ by dame Constaunce
And went his way þat god ȝeue him meschaunce 602

Sone after comþ þis Constable hom agayn 603
And eek alla þat was kyng of þat lond
And say his wyf dispitously I-slayn
For which ful oft / he wept and wrong his hond 606
And in þe bed þe blody knyf he fond
By Dame Custaunce allas what might he say
For verray woo / hir witt was al a-way 609

To king Alla was told al þis meschaunce [*leaf* 79] 610
And eek/þe tyme and wher and eek þe wyse
That in a schip was founden þis Constaunce
As here bifore ȝe haue herd me deuyse / 613
The kinges hert of pite gan agrise
whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in mysauenture 616

For as þe lomb toward his deþ is brought / 617
So stant þis Innocent bifore þe kyng
This false knight þat haþ þis tresoun wrought
Bereþ hir an hand þat sche hath don þis þing 620
But neuer þe les þer was gret mornyng
Among þe people and seyn þey can not gesse
That sche had doon so gret a wikkednesse 623

For þey han seyen hir so vertuous 624
And louyng hermegyld right as hir lyf
Of þis bar witnesse euerich in þat hous
Saue he þat slowȝ hermegyld with his knyf 627
This gentil kyng haþ caught a gret motyf
Of his witnesse and þought/ he wold enquere
Deppere in þis cas a trouþe to lere 630

Allas Constaunce þou ne has no champio*un* 631
Ne fighte canstow nat' so welaway
But' he þat' for oure redempcio*un*
Bonde Sathan and ȝit' liþ þer he lay 634
So be þy stronge champio*un* þis day
For but crist' vpon þe miracle kythe
withouten gilt' þou schalt' be slayn as swithe 637

Sche set' hir doun on knees and þan sche sayde 638
Immortal god þat' sauedest' Susanne
For false blame and þou mercyful mayde
Mary I mene doughter of' seint' Anne 641
Bifore whos child aungeles syng' Osanne
If' I be gultles of' þis felonye
My socour be for elles schal I dye 644

Haue ȝe not' seye somtyme a pale face 645
Among' a prees of' him þat' haþ be lad
Toward his deþ wher him geyneþ no grace /
And such a colour in his face haþ had [*leaf 79, back*] 648
Men mighte knowe his face was so bystad
Among' alle þe faces in þat route
So stant Constance and lokeþ hire aboute / 651

O queenes lyuyng' in prosperite 652
Duchesses and ȝe ladies eu*er*ychon
haueþ som reuþe on hir adu*er*site
An emp*er*oures dought*er* stond allon 655
Sche nath no wight' to whom to make hir moon
O blod ryal þat' stondest' in þis drede /
Ferre be þy frendes at þy grete neede / 658

This Alla kyng' haþ such compassio*un* 659
As gentil hert/ is fulfild of' pite
That' from his eyen ran þe wat*er* doun
Now hastily do fech a book' q*uo*d he / 662

And if' þis knight' wil swere how þat' sche /
This wo*m*man slow3 3et' wol we us avyse
whom þat' we wille schal be oure iustise 665

A brito*u*n book' I-write wiþ eu*au*ngiles 666
was fette and on þis book'/ he swor anoon
Sche gultif' was and in þe mene whiles
An hond hi*m* smot' vpon þe nekke boon 669
That' doun he fel anon right' at' a stoon
And boþe his yen brast' out' of' his face
In sight' of' euery body in þat' place 672

A vois was herd in general audience 673
And seist' þou hast' disclaundred gulteles
The dought*er* of' holy chirche in hire p*re*sence
Thus hastow doon & 3it' I holde my pees 676
Of' þis meruaile agast' was al þe prees
As mased folk' þey stooden eu*er*ychon
For drede of' wreche saue Custau*n*ce allon 679

Gret' was þe drede and eek' þe repentaunce 680
Of' hem þat' hadden gret suspecci*ou*n
vpon þe sely Innocent' Custaunce
And for þis miracle in conclusi*ou*n 683
And by Custaunces mediaci*ou*n
The kyng' and many oþer in þe place
Conu*er*ted was / thanked be cristes grace [*leaf* 80] 686

This false knight' was slayn for his vntrouþe / 687
By Iuggement' of' Alla hastyly
And 3it' Custa*u*nce haþ of' his deþ gret' rouþe
And after þis ihus of' his mercy 690
Made alla wedde ful solempnely
This holy mayde þat' is bright' and schene /
And þus haþ crist' I-maad Constance a queene 693

But who was woful if I schal not lye / 694
Of þis weddyng but Domegild and þo
The kynges mooder ful of tyrannye
hir þought hir cursed herte brast a-two 697
Sche wolde nat hir sone had I-do so
hir þought despyte / þat he schulde take
So straunge a creature vnto his make 700

Me lust not of þe caf ne of þe stree 701
Make so long a tale as of þe corn
what schuld I telle of þe realte
Of mariage / or which cours goþ biforn 704
who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn
The fruyt of euery tale is for to seye
They ete & drynk / and daunce / and synge & pleye 707

They gon to bed as it was skile & right 708
For þough þat wyfes ben ful holy þinges
They moste take in pacience a night
Such man*er* necessaries as ben plesynges 711
To folk that han I-wedded hem wiþ rynges
And haluendel her holynesse ley a side
And for þe tyme it may non oþer betyde 714

On hire he gat a knaue child anoon 715
And to a bisschop*e* & a Constable eeke
he took his wyf to kepe whan he is goon
To scotlondward his foom*en* for to seeke 718
Now faire Custa*u*nce þat is so humble & meeke
So long is goon wiþ childe til þat stille
Sche held hir chambre abidyng goddes wille 721

The tyme is come a knaue child sche bere 722
Maurius atte funston*e* men him calle
This Constabil doþ come forþ a messager [*leaf* 80, *back*]
And wrot to his kyng þat cleped was Alle 725

how þat' þis blisful tydyng' is bifalle
And oþer þinges spedful for to seye
he takeþ þe *lett*re and forþ he goþ his weye 728

This messanger to doon his auauntage 729
vnto þe kynges moder he goþ ful swiþe
And salueth hire / fair in his langage
Ma dame q*uo*d he ȝe may be glad and bliþe 732
And þanke god an hundred þousand siþe
My lady queen haþ child wiþouten doute
To ioye and blis of' al þe reame aboute 735

Lo heer þe *lett*res sealed of' þis þing' 736
That' I mot' bere with al þe hast' I may
If' ȝe wole ought' vnto ȝoure sone þe kyng'
I am ȝoure seruaunt' boþe night' and day 739
Doungyld answerde as now þis tyme nay
But here al nyght' I wol þou take þy rest'
To morwen I wil say þe what' me lest' 742

This messanger drank' sadly ale and wyn 743
And stolen were his *lett*res pryuely
Out' of' his box whil he sleep as a swyn
And countrefeet' þey were subtily 746
Anoþer sche him wroot' ful synfully
vnto þe kyng' direct/ of' þis matiere
Fro his Constable as ȝe schul after heere 749

The *lett*re spak' þe queen delyuered was 750
Of' so orryble and feendly creature
That' in þe castel noon so hardy was
That' eny while dorste þ*er*in endure / 753
The mooder was an Elf' by auenture
Bycome by charmes or by sorcerie
And euery man hatiþ hir companyne 756

Wo was þis kyng' whan he þis letter had sein 757
But' to no wight' he told his sorwes sore
But' of' his owen hand he wrot' agayn .
welcome þe sond of' crist' for eueremore 760
To me þat' am now lerned in his lore
lord welcome be þy lust' and þy pleasaunce [*leaf* 81]
My lust' I putte al in þyn ordinaunce 763

Kepeth þis child al be it foul or fair 764
And eek' my wyf' vnto myn hom comyng'
Crist' whan him lust' may sende me an hair
More agreable þan þis to my likyng' 767
The l*ett*re he seleth pryuyly wepyng'
which to þe messager he took' ful sone
And forþ he goth þer nys no more to done 770

O messager fulfild of' dronkenesse 771
Strong' is þy breþ þy lymes faltren ay
And þou bywreyest' all*e* sykernesse
Thy mynde is lorn þou ianglest' as a Iay 774
Thy face is torned al in a newe array
Ther drunkenesse regneþ in eny route
Ther is no counseil hid wiþouten doute 777

O Domegyld I haue non englisch digne 778
vnto þy malice and þy tyrannye
And þerfor to þe feend I þe resigne
let' him endyten of' þi treccherie 781
Fy mannyssch fy .o. nay by god I lye
Fy feendly spirit' for I dar wel telle
Though þou here walke þy spirit' is in helle 784

This messang*er* comþ fro þe kyng' agayn 785
And at' þe kinges modres court' he light'
And sche was of' þis messeng*er* ful fayn
And pleseþ him in al þat' euer sche might' 788

he drank' and wel his gurdel vnderpight'
he slepeþ and he fareþ in his gyse
Al nyght' vnto þe sonne gan arise 791

Eft' were his *lett*res stolen euerichon 792
And countrefeted lettres in þis wise
The kyng' coma*u*ndeþ his constable anon
vp peyne of' hangyng' of' an hei3 Iustise 795
That' he schulde suffre in no maner wyse
Constaunce in his regne for to abyde
Thre dayes and a quarter of' a tyde 798

But' in þe same schip as he hir fond 799
hire and hir 3onge sone and al hire gere [*leaf* 81, *back*]
he schulde putte and crowde fro þe londe
And charge hire þat' sche neuer eft' come þere 802
·O. my Constaunce wel may þy goost' haue fere
And slepyng' in þy drem ben in penaunce
whan Domegyl cast' al þis ordynaunce / 805

This messang*er* a-morwe whan he awook' 806
vnto þe castel held þe nexte way
And to þe constable he þe *lett*re took'
And whan þat' he þe pitous lettre say 809
Ful ofte he seyd allas and welaway
Lord crist' q*uo*d he how may þis world endure
So ful of' synne is many a creature 812

O mighty god if' þat' it be þy wille 813
Seþ þou art' rightful iugge how may þis be /
That' þou wolt' suffre Innocent3 to spille /
And wikked folk' regne in p*rosper*ite 816
·O good Constance allas so wo is me
That' I moot' be þy tormentour or deye
On schamful deþ þer is non oþer weye 819

Wepyng' boþe ȝong' & olde in al þat' place 820
whan þat' þe kyng' þis corsed *lett*re sent'
And Constance with a dedly pale face
The fayre day toward hir schip sche went 823
But neuerþeles sche takeþ in good entent
The wil of' *crist'* / and knelyng' on þe grounde
Sche sayde lord ay welcome be þy sonde 826

He þat' me kepte fro þe false blame 827
whil I was on þe lond amonges ȝou
He can me kepe from harm & eek' fro schame
In þe see al þough I se nat' how 830
As strong' as euer he was he is right' now
In him trust' I. & in his mooder deere
That' is to me my sayl and eek' my steere / 833

Hir litel child lay wepyng' in hir arm 834
And knelyng' pitously to him sche sayde /
Pees litle sone I wol do þe noon harm
wiþ þat' hir kerchef' of hir hed sche brayde 837
And ouer his litel yȝen sche it layde [*leaf* 82]
And in hir arm sche lullith it' wel faste
And vnto heuen hir eyȝen vp sche caste 840

Moder q*uo*d sche and mayde bright' marie 841
Soþ is þat' þurgh wo*m*mannes eggement
Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to dye
For which þy child was on a cros torent 844
Thyn blisful eyȝen sawh̄ al þis torment
Then nys þer noon compariso*u*n bitwene
Thy wo and any woo may nat' sustene 847

Thow saugh̄ þy child I-slaw byfor þyn yen 848
And ȝit' now lyueþ my litel child par fay
Now lady bright' to whom all*e* woful cryen
Thou glory of' wo*m*manhod þou faire may 851

Thou heuen of refute brighte sterre of day
Rewe on my child þat of þyn gentilnesse /
Rewest on euery synful in destresse 854

O litel child allas what is þi gilt 855
That neuer wroughtest synne as ȝet par de
why wil þyn harde fader han þe spilt
O. mercy deere and Constable seyde sche 858
And let my litel child here dwelle with þe
And if þou darst not sauen him for blame /
So kys him oones in his fadres name 861

Ther wiþ sche loked bakward to þe lond 862
And seyde far wel housbond rewþeles
And vp sche rist and walkeþ doun þe stronde
Toward þe schip hir folweþ al þe prees 865
And euer sche preyeþ hir child to hold his pees
And took hir leue and wiþ an holy entent
Sche blesseþ hire and to þe schip sche went 868

Vytailled was þe schip it is no drede 869
Abundauntly for hire ful longe space
And oþer necessaries þat schulde nede
Sche had ynowȝ heryed be cristeȝ grace 872
For wynd and water almighty god purchace
And bryng hir hom I can no bettre say
But in þe see sche dryueþ forþ hir way 875

[*PART III.*]

Alla þe kyng comþ hom soon after þis [*leaf* 82, *back*] 876
vnto þe Castel of þe which I tolde
And askeþ wher his wyf and his child ys
The Constable gan aboute his herte colde 879

And playnly al þe maner he him tolde
As ȝe han herd / I can telle it no better
And schewed þe kynges seal and his letter 882

And seyde lord as ȝe coma*un*ded me 883
vp peyne of' deþ so haue I do certayn
This messag*er* tormented was til he
Moste biknowe and telle it' plat' and playn · 886
Fro nyght to night in what' place he had layn ·
And þus by witt/ and subtil enqueryng'
ymagined was by wham þis gan to spryng' 889

The hand was knowen þat' þe l*ettr*e wroot 890
And al þe venym of' þis cursed dede
But' in what wyse certeynly I noot
Theffect' is þis þat' alla out of' drede 893
his moder slough as men may pleynly reede /
For þat' sche traytour was to hir ligeaunce
Thus endeþ olde Domegild wiþ meschaunce 896

The sorwe þat/ þis alla night and day 897
Makþ for his wyf' and for his child also
Ther is no tonge þat' it telle may
But' now I wol vnto Custaunce go 900
That' fleetetþ in þe see in peyne and wo
.V. ȝeer and more as likeþ cristes sonde
Er þat' hir schip approched vnto londe 903

Vnder an hethen castel atte last' 904
Of' which þe name in my text' nouȝt' I fynde
Consta*un*ce and eek' hir child þe see vpcast'
Almighty god þat' saueth al mankynde / 907
Haue on Consta*un*ce and on hir child som mynde
That' fallen is in hethen hond eft' sone
In poynt' to spille as I schal telle ȝou soone 910

Doun fro þe Castel comþ þer many a wiht' 911
To gawren on þis schip and on Constaunce
But' schortly fro þe castel on a niht'
The lordes styward God ȝiue him meschaunce [leaf 83] 914
A þeef' þat had reneyed oure creaunce
Com in to schip alone and seyd he scholde
hir lemman be wheþir sche wold or nolde 917

Wo was þis wrecched wo*m*man þo bigoon 918
hire childe crieþ and sche pytously
But' blisful mary hilp hir right' anoon
For wiþ hir strengþe wel and mightily 921
The theef' fel ouer boord al sodeinly
And in þe see he drenched for vengaunce
And þus haþ crist' vnwemmed kept' Constance 924

O foule lust/ O luxurie lo þin ende / 925
Nought' oonly þat' þou feyntest' mannes mynde
But' verrayly þou wolt' his body schende
The ende of' þyn werk' or of' þy lustes blynde 928
his compleynyng' how many may men fynde
That' nought' for werk' som tyme but/ for þentent'
To doon his synne ben eyþer slayn or schent / 931

How may þis weyke wo*m*man han þe strengþe 932
hir to defende aȝein þe renegat'
O Golias vnmesurable of' lengþe
how mighte dauid make þe so mate 935
So ȝong' and of' armure so desolate
how dorst' he loke vpon þyn dredful face
wel may men seyn it' nas but goddes g*r*ace 938

Who ȝaf' Iudith corage or hardynesse / 939
To slen him Olefernes in his tent
And to delyu*er*en out' þe wrecchednes
The peple of' god I say in þis entent' 942

That' right' as good spiryte vigor sent
To hem and saued hem out of' meschaunce /
So sent he might' and vigor to Constaunce 945

Forth goþ hir schip þurghout þe narwe mouth 946
Of' Iubalter and Septe dryuyng ay
Somtyme west' som tyme north and south
And somtyme Est' ful many a wery way 949
Til cristes mooder blessed be sche ay
haþ schapen þurgh hir endeles goodnesse
To make an ende of' hir heuynesse [leaf 83, back] 952

Now let' vs stynt' of' Constance but' a þrowe 953
And speke we of' / þe Romayn Emperour
That' out' of' Surrye haþ by lettres knowe
The slaughter of' cristen folk' and deshonour 956
Doon to his douȝter by a fals traytour
I mene þe cursed and wikked sowdenesse
That' at' þe fest' leet' slee boþe more and lesse 959

For which þis Emperour haþ sent' anoon 960
his senatours with real ordynaunce
And oþer lordes got wot' many oon
On surriens to take high vengaunce 963
They brenne / sleen / and bringen hem to meschaunce
Ful many a day but' schortly þis is þende
homward to Rome þey schapen hem to wende 966

This Senatour repayreþ wiþ victorie 967
To Romeward saylyng' ful really
And mette þe schip dryuyng' as seiþ þe story
In which Constance sitteþ ful pitously 970
No þing' ne knew he what' sche was ne why
Sche was in such aray / sche nolde seye
Of' hire astaat' al þough sche scholde deye 973

He bryngeþ hir to Rome and to his wyf' 974
he ȝaf' hir and hir ȝonge sone also
And wiþ þe Senatour lad sche hir lyf'
Thus can our lady. bryngen out' of' woo 977
woful Constance and many anoþ*er* moo
And longe tyme dwelled sche in þat' place
In holy werk*es*. as euer was hir grace / 980

The Senatoures wif' hir aunte was 981
But' for al þat' sche knew hir neuer more
I wol no lenger taryen in þis cas
But' to kyng' Alla which I spak' of' ȝore / 984
That' for his wyf' wepeþ and sikeþ sore /
I wol retorne / and lete I wol Constaunce
vnder þe Senatoures gouerna*u*nce 987

Kyng' alla which þat' had his mooder slayn 988
vpon a day fel in such repentaunce /
That' if' I schortly telle schal and playn [*leaf* 84]
To Rome he comeþ to receyue his penau*n*ce 991
And putte him in þe popes ordyna*u*nce
In heigh and lowe and ihū crist' bysought'
Forȝef' his wikked werk*es* þat' he wrought' 994

The fame anon þurgh Rome toun is born 995
how alla kyng' schal come in pilgrymage
By herberiourȝ þat wenten him biforn
For which þe Senatour as was vsage 998
Rood him aȝein and many of' his lynage
As wel to schewen his magnificence
As to doon eny kyng' a reuerence 1001

Gret' cheere doþ þis noble Senatour 1002
To kyng' Alla and he to him also
Euerich of' hem doþ oþer gret' honour
And so bifel þat' on a day or two 1005

This Senatour is to kyng' Alla go
To fest' and schortly if' I schal not lye
Constances sone / went in his companye 1008

Som men wold seyn at' request' of' Custaunce 1009
This Senatour haþ lad þis child to feste
I may not telle euery circumstaunce
Be as be may þer was he atte leste 1012
But soth it is right' at' his modres heste
Byforn hem alle duryng' þe metes space
The child stood lokyng' in þe kynges face 1015

This alla kyng' haþ of' þe child gret' wonder 1016
And to þe Senatour he seyd anoon
whos is þat' faire child þat' stondeþ ȝonder
I not' quod he by god and by seynt' Ion 1019
A moder he haþ but fader haþ he non
That I of' woot' and schortly in a stounde
he told Alla how þat' þis child was founde / 1022

But god woot quod þis senatour also 1023
So vertuous a lyuer in my lyf'
Ne saugh I neuer such as sche nomo
Of' worldly womman mayden or of' wyf' 1026
I dar wel say sche hadde leuer a knyf'
Thurghout' hir brest' þan ben a womman wikke [leaf 84, back]
Ther is no man can bryng' hir to þat' prikke 1029

Now was þis child as lik' vnto Custaunce 1030
As possible is a creature to be
This alla haþ þe face in remembraunce
Of Dame Custaunce and þer on mused he 1033
If' þat' þe childes mooder were ought' sche
That' is his wyf' and pryuely he hight'
And sped him fro þe table þat' he might' 1036

Par fay þought' he fantom is in myn heed 1037
I ought' to deme of' righful Iuggement'
That' in þe salte see my wyf' is deed
And afterward he made þis argument 1040
what' woot' I wher crist' haþ hider sent
My wyf' by see as wel as he hir sent
To my contre fro þennes þat' sche went' 1043

And after noom home wiþ þe senatour 1044
Goth alla for to see þis wonder chaunce
This Senatour doþ alla gret' honour
And hastely he sent after Custaunce 1047
But' trusteþ wel hir luste nat' to daunce /
whan þat' sche wiste wherfore was þat' sonde
vnnethes on hir feet/ sche mighte stonde / 1050

Whan alla saugh his wyf fayre he hir grette 1051
And wepte þat' it' was rewþe to se
For at' þe firste look' he on hir sette
he knew wel verrely þat' it was sche 1054
And for sorwe as domb sche stant as tre
So was hire herte schett' in his distresse
whan sche remembred his vnkyndenesse 1057

Twies sche swowned in his owen sight' 1058
he wept' and him excuseþ pitously
Now god q*uod* he and all*e* his halwes bright'
So wisly on my soule haue mercy 1061
That' of' ȝoure harm as gulteles am I
As is maurice my sone so lyk' ȝoure face
Elles þe feend me fecche out of' þis place / 1064

Long was þe sobbyng' and þe bitter peyne 1065
Or þat' here woful herte mighte cesse [*leaf* 85]
Gret' was þe pite for to here hem pleyne
Thurgh whiche playntȝ gan here wo encresse 1068

I pray ȝou alle my labour to relesse
I may not telle al here sorwe vnto morwe
I am so wery for to speke of þe sorwe / 1071

But fynally whan þat the soþ is wist 1072
That alla gilteles was of hir woo
I trowe an hundred tymes þey ben kist
And such a blys is þer bitwix hem tuo 1075
That saue þe ioye þat lasteþ eu*er*emo
Ther is noon lyk þat eny creature
haþ seyn or schal. whil þat þe world may dure 1078

Tho prayde sche hir housbond meekely 1079
In þe relees of hir pytous pyne
The he wold preye hir fader specially
That of his maieste he wold enclyne 1082
To vouche sauf som tyme with him to dyne
Sche preyeþ him eek he schulde by no weye
Vnto hir fader no word of hir seye 1085

Som men wold seye þat hir child Maurice 1086
Doþ his message vnto þe Emp*er*our
But as I gesse alla was nat so nyce
To him þat is so souerayn of honour 1089
As he þat is of cristes folk þe flour
Sent eny child but it is best to deeme
he went himself and so it may wel seme / 1092

This Emp*er*our haþ *gra*unted gentilly 1093
To come to dyner as he him bysought
As wel rede I he loked besily
vpon þe child and on his douȝ*ter* þought 1096
Alla goþ to his In and as him ought
Arrayed for þis fest in euery wyse
As ferforth as his connyng may suffise 1099

The morwe cam and alla gan him dresse 1100
And eek' his wyf' þe Emperour for to meete
And for þey ryde in ioye and in gladnesse /
And whan sche saugh hir fader in þe streete 1103
Sche light' a doun and falleþ him to feete [*leaf* 85, *back*]
Fader q*uo*d sche ȝour ȝonge child Constance
Is now ful clene ou of' ȝour remembr*a*unce 1106

I am ȝour doughter Custaunce q*uo*d sche 1107
That' whilom ȝe haue sent' vnto Surrye
It' am I fader þat' in þe salte see
was put' alloon and dampned for to dye 1110
Now goode fader mercy I ȝou crye
Send me no more vnto noon hethenesse
But' þanke my lord her of' his kyndenesse 1113

Who can þe pytous Ioye telle al 1114
Bitwix hem þre siþ þey be þus I-mette
But' of' my tale make an ende I schal
The day goþ fast' I wol no lenger lette 1117
This glade folk' to dyner þey ben sette
In ioye and blys at' mete I let' hem dwelle
A þousand fold wel more þan I can telle. 1120

This child Maurice was siþþen Emperour 1121
I-maad by þe pope and lyued cristenly
To cristes chirche dede he gret' honour
But' I let' al his story passen by 1124
Of' Custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romayn gestes men may fynde
Maurices lyf' I bere it nought' in mynde 1127

This kyng' alla whan he his tyme say 1128
with his Constaunce his holy wyf' so swete
To Engelond þey com þe righte way
wher as þey lyue in ioye and in quyete 1131

But litel whil it last' I ȝou biheete ;
Ioy of' þis world // for tyme wol not' abyde
Fro day to nigh̃t' it chaungeth as þe tyde 1134

Who lyued euer in such delyt' a day 1135
That' him ne meued eyþer his conscience
Of' Ire or talent' / or som maner affray
Enuy or pride or passio*un* or offence 1138
I ne say but' for þis ende þis sentence
But' litel whil in ioye or in plesaunce
lasteþ þe blis / of' alla with Custaunce 1141

For deth þat' takþ of' heigh̃ & low his rent [*leaf* 86] 1142
whan passed was a ȝeere as I gesse /
Out' of' þis worlde / kyng' alla he hent'
For whom Custauns. haþ ful gret' heuynesse / 1145
Now let' vs pray. þat' god his soule blesse /
And dame Custaunce fynally to say
Toward þe toun of' Rome goþ hir way 1148

To Rome is come þis nobil creature 1149
And fynt' hir freendes þer boþe hool & sound
Now is sche skaped al hir auenture
And whanne sche hir fader had I-founde 1152
Doun on hir knees falleþ sche to grounde
wepyng' for tendirnes in herte blithe
Sche heried god an hundred þousand sithe 1155

In vertu and in holy almesdede 1156
They lyuen alle. and neu*er* a sǫndre wende
Til deþ departe hem þis lyf' þey lede
And far now wel my tale is at an ende 1159
Now ihū crist' þat' of' his might' may sende /
Ioy after wo gouerne vs in his grace /
And keep ous alle. þat' ben in þis place / 1162

Toward þis ilke daunce I drough̃ ful ȝerne /
In hope þat' som wisdom schuld I lerne /
But' certeynly er I com fully þere
Vanysshid was þis daunce he nyste where / 996
No creature saugh he þat' bar lif'
Sauf' on þe greene he saugh̃ sittyng' a wyf' /
A fouler wight' þer may no man deuyse
Aȝens þe knight' þis olde wyf' gan ryse 1000
And sayder s*ir* knigh̃t' heer forth lith no way
Tel me what'. ȝe seekyn by ȝour fay
P*ar* aduent*ure*. it' may þe better be /
Thise olde folk' can mochil þing' quod sche 1004
My lieue modir quod þis knight' certayn
I am but' ded but' if' þat' I can sayn
what' þing' is it'. þat' wo*m*men most' desire
Couþe ȝe me wisse. I wold wel quyt ȝour huyre / 1008
Plight' me þy trouth. her in my*n* hond quod sche [*lf* 99, *bk*]
The nexte þing' þat' I require þe
Thou schalt' it doo if' it be in þy migh̃t'
And I wol telle it þe er it be night' 1012
haue her my trouþe quod þe knigh̃t' I *gra*unte
Thanne quod sche I dar me wel auaunte
Þy lif' is sauf' for I wol stonde þer by
vpon my lif' þe queen wol say as I 1016
let' se which is þe proudest' of' hem alle
þat' werith on a couerchief' or a calle
þat' dar say nay of' þing' I schal þe teche
let' vs go forth wiþouten more speche 1020
Tho rowned sche a pistil in his eere
And bad him to be glad and haue no fere
whan þay ben comen to þe court' þis knigh̃t
Sayd he had holde. þat' day þat' he high̃t' 1024
Al redy was his answer as he sayde
Ful many a noble wyf' and many a mayde
And many a wydow for þat' þay ben wyse
The queen hirself' sittyng' as a Iustise 1028

Assemblid ben his answer for to hiere
And afterward þis knightᵗ was bode appiere
To euery wightᵗ comaundid was cilence
And þatᵗ þe knigħtᵗ schuld telle in audience 1032
whatᵗ þingᵗ þatᵗ worldly wo*m*men louen bestᵗ
¶ þe knigħtᵗ ne stood notᵗ stille as doþ a bestᵗ
Butᵗ to þe questio*u*n anoon answerde
wiþ manly voys þat al the courtᵗ it herde 1036
My liege lady generally quod he
wo*m*men desiren to haue souerayntе
As wel ouer hir housbond as ouer hir loue
And for to be in maystry him aboue 1040
This is þe mostᵗ desir þough ȝe me kille /
Doþ as ȝowlistᵗ I am heer atᵗ ȝour wille
In al þe court ne was þer wyfᵗ ne mayde
Ne wydow þatᵗ contraried þatᵗ he sayde 1044
Butᵗ sayden he. was worþy haue his lifᵗ
And wiþ þatᵗ word vp startᵗ þat olde wifᵗ
which þatᵗ þe knightᵗ saugh sittyngᵗ on þe grene [*leaf* 100]
Mercy quod sche my soueraign*e* lady queene 1048
Er þatᵗ ȝour courtᵗ departe doþ me rigħtᵗ
I taughte þis answer vnto þe knightᵗ
For which he plighte me his trouþe there
The firste þingᵗ þatᵗ I wold him requer*e* 1052
he wold itᵗ do ifᵗ itᵗ lay in his mightᵗ
Bifore þe courtᵗ þen pray I þe sir knigħtᵗ
Quod sche þatᵗ þou me take vnto þy wif
For wel þou wostᵗ þatᵗ I haue keptᵗ þy lifᵗ 1056
Ifᵗ I say fals sey nay vpon þy fey
This knightᵗ answerd allas and waylawey
I wotᵗ rigħtᵗ wel þatᵗ such was my byhestᵗ
For goddes loue as chese a ne requestᵗ 1060
Takᵗ al my good and let my body go
Nay quod sche þan I schrew vs boþe tuo
For þough þatᵗ I be foule old and poure
I nolde for al þe metal ne for þe oure 1064

That' vnder erthe is graue or lith aboue
But' I þy wife. were and eek' þy loue
My loue quod he. nay nay. my dampnacio*un*
Allas þat' eny of' my nacio*un* 1068
Schuld euer so foule disparagid be
But/ al for nought'. þe ende is þis þat' he
Constreigned was. he needes most hir wedde
And takith his wyf' and goþ wiþ hir to bedde 1072
¶ Now wolden som men say p*ar* aduenture
That' for my necgligence I do no cure
To telle ȝow þe ioye and tharray
That' at' þat' fest' was maad þat ilke day 1076
To which þing' schortly answeren I schal
And say þer nas feste ne ioy at' al
Ther nas but' heuynes and mochil sorwe
For priuely he weddyd hir in a morwe 1080
And alday hudde him. as doþ an oule
So wo was him his wyf' loked so foule
Gret' was þe wo. þe knight' had in his þought
whan he was with his wyf' on bedde brought' 1084
He walwith and he torneth to and fro [*leaf* 100, *back*]
his olde wyf' lay smylyng' euer mo
And sayd o deere housbond b*ene*dicite[1] [[1] MS. bn̄dicite]
Fareth euery knight' wiþ his wyf' as ȝe / 1088
Is þis þe lawe of' king' arthures hous
Is euery knight' of' his þus daungerous
I am ȝour oughne loue / and ȝour wyf'
I am sche þat' hath sauyd ȝour lyf' 1092
And certes ne dede I ȝow neuer vnright'
why fare ȝe þus with me þe firste night'
ȝe fare lik' a man þat' had left' his wit/
what' is my gult'. for godes loue tel me it 1096
And it' schal be amendid if' þat' I may
Amendid quod þis knight' allas nay nay
It' wol nought' ben amendid neuer mo
Thow art' so loþly and so old also 1100

And þerto comen of so lowh a kynde
That litil wonder is þough I walwe and wynde
So wolde god myn herte wolde brest
Is þis quod sche þe cause of ȝour vnrest? 1104
ȝe certeynly quod he no wonder is
Now sire quod sche I couþe amende al þis
If þat me list er it were dayes þre /
So wel ȝe mighte bere ȝow to me 1108
But for ȝe speken of such gentilesse
As is descendit out of old richesse
Therfor schuld ȝe. ben holden gentil men)
Such arrogaunce. is not worth an hen 1112
lok who þat is most vertuous alway
Priue and pert and most entendiþ ay
To do þe gentil dedes þat he can
Tak him for þe grettest gentil man 1116
Crist wol we clayme of him oure gentilesse
Nought of oure eldres for our gret richesse
For þough þey ȝiue vs al her heritage
For which we clayme to be of high parage 1120
ȝit may þay not biqueþe for no þing
To noon of vs so vertuous lyuyng
That made hem gentil men y-callid be [*leaf* 101]
And bad vs folwe hem in such degre 1124
wel can þe wyse poet of Florence
That hatte Daunt speke of þis sentence /
Lo in such maner of rym is Dauntes tale
Ful seeld vprisith by his braunchis smale / 1128
Prowes of man. for god of his prowesse
wol þat we clayme of him our gentilesse
For of our auncestres. we no þing clayme
But temporal þing þat men may hurt and mayme 1132
Ek euery wight wot þis as wel as I
If gentiles were plaunted naturelly
Vnto a certayn lignage doun þe line
Priue ne apert/. þay wolde neuer fine 1136

To don of' gentilesce þe fair office
Thay mighť nought' doon no vileny or vice
Tak' fuyr and ber it' in þe derkest' hous
Bitwixe þis. and þe mo*u*nt Cankasous 1140
And let' men schit'. þe dores and go þenne
ʒit' wol þe fuyr as fair and lighte brenne
As twenty þousand men might' it' biholde
his office naturel ay wol it holde 1144
vp p*er*il on my lif' til þat' it dye
her / may ʒe se wel how þat genterye
Is nought' annexid to possessio*u*n
Sithins folk' ne doon her op*er*acio*u*n 1148
Alway as doth þe fuyr lo in his kynde
For god it wot' men may ful often fynde
A lordes sone do schame and vilonye
And he þat' wol haue pris of' his gentrie 1152
For he was boren of' a gentil hous
And had his eldres noble and v*er*tuous
And nyl himselue. doo no gentil dedis
Ne folw his gentil aunce*ter* þat' deed is 1156
he is nought' gentil be he duk' or erl.
For vileyn synful deedes makeþ a cherl.
For gentilnesse nys but' renome
Of' þin auncestres for her heigh bounte 1160
which is a straunge þing' to þy p*er*sone [*leaf* 101, *back*]
Thy gentilesce comeþ fro god alloone
Than comþ oure verray gentilesse of' grace
It' was no þing' biquethe vs wiþ oure place 1164
Thinkeþ how nobil as saith valerius
was þilke tullius hostilius
That' out' of' pouert / ros to high noblesse
Redith Senek/. and redith eek/ Boece. 1168
Ther schuln ʒe se expresse þat' no dred is
þat' he is gentil þat doþ gentil dedis
And þerfor lieue housbond I conclude
Al were it that' myn auncetres wer rude 1172

ȝit' may þe highe god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lyue v*er*tuously
Than am I gentil whan þat' I bygynne
To lyue vertuously and weyuen synne 1176
And þer as ȝe of' povert' me repreue
The heighe god on whom þat' we bilieue
In wilful pouert' ches to lese his lif'
And certes eu*er*y man. mayden or wif' 1180
May vnderstonde þat' Iħc' heuen king'
Ne wold not' chese. a vicious lyuyng'
Glad pouert is an honest' þing' certayn
This wol Senek' and oþer clerkes sayn 1184
who þat' holt' him payd of' his pouert
I hold him riche. al had he nouȝt a schert'
he þat' coueitith is a pore wight
For he wold haue þat' is not' in his might' 1188
But' he þat' nouȝt' haþ. ne coueyteth nouȝt/ to haue
Is riche al þough ȝe hold him but a knaue
Verray pouert' is synne p*ro*prely
Iuuenal saith of' pouert' merily 1192
¶ The pore man whan he goþ by þe way
Bifore þe theues he may synge and play
Pouert' is hateful and as I gesse /
A ful gret brynger out' of' busynesse / 1196
A gret' amender eek' of' Sapiens
To him þat takith it in paciens
Pouert' is þis al þough it seme elenge [*leaf* 102]
Possessio*u*n þat' no wight' wil chalenge 1200
.∴. Pouert' ful often whan a man is lowe
Makith him his god and eek' himself/ to knowe
.∴. Pouert' a spectacle is as þinkith me
þurgh which he may his verray frendes se 1204
And þerfor sir syth þat' I ȝow nought' greue
Of' my pouert' no more ȝe me repreue
// Now sir of' elde ȝe repreue me
And certes sir þough noon auctorite 1208

were in no book' ȝe gentils of' honour
Sayn þat' men schuld an old wight doon fauour
And clepe him fader for ȝour gentilesse
And certes I schal fynden as I gesse 1212
Than drede ȝou nought' to ben a cokewold
Now þer þat' ȝe sayn I am foul and old
For filthe and elde also mot' I the
Ben grete wardeyns vpon chastite / 1216
But' natheles sith I knowe ȝour delyt'
I schal fulfille ȝoure worldly appetyt'
Chese now quod sche oon of' þese þinges tweye
To haue me foul and old til þat I deye 1220
And be to ȝow a trewe humble wyf'
And neuer ȝow displease in al my lyf'
Or elles ȝe wol haue me ȝong' and fair
And take ȝour auenture of' þe repair 1224
Þat' schal be to ȝour hous by cause of' me
Or in som oþer place may wel be
Now chese ȝour seluen whethir þat' ȝow likith
This knight' auysith him and sore sikith 1228
But' atte last' he sayd in þis manere
My lady and my loue. and my wif' so deere
I putte me in ȝour wyse gouernaunce
Chesith ȝour self' which may be most' pleasaunce 1232
And most' honour to ȝow and me also
I do no fors þe wheþer of þe tuo
For as ȝow likith it' suffisith me
Than haue I gete of' ȝow þe maystry quod sche / 1236
Sith I may gouern and chese as me list/ [*leaf* 102, *back*]
ȝe certis wyf' quod he I hold it best'
kys me quod sche we ben no lenger wroþe
For by my trouþe. I wol be to ȝow boþe 1240
This is to say ȝe boþe fair and good
I pray to god þat' I mot' sterue wood
But/ I be to ȝow also good and trewe
As euer was wyf' siþþen þe world was newe 1244

And but/ I be to morow as fair to seen
As eny lady emperesse or queen
That' is bitwixe thest' and eek' þe west'
Doth by my lyf'. right' euen as ȝow lest' 1248
Cast' vp þe cortyns and look' what' þis is
And whan þe knyght' saugh verrayly al þis
That' sche so fair was and so ȝong' þer to
For ioye he hent' hir in hir armes tuo 1252
his herte bathid in a bath of' blisse
A thousand tyme on rowe he gan hir kisse
And sche obeyed him in euery þing'
That' mighte doon him pleisauns or likyng' 1256
And þus þay lyue vnto her lyues end
In parfyt' ioye and ihū crist' vs sende
housbondes meke ȝonge and freissche on bedde
And grace to ouerbyde hem þat' we wedde 1260
And eek' I pray to Ihū schort' her lyues
That' wil nought' be gouerned after her wyues
And old and angry nygardes of' despense
God send hem sone verray pestilence / 1264

¶ Here endith þe wif' of' Bathe hire tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygy*n*neth þe p*r*ologe of' þe Freres tale

THis worthy lymytour þis noble Frere
he made alway a lourynge cheere
vpon the sompno*ur*. but' for honeste /
No vileyns worde. ȝit' to him spak' he 1268
But' atte last' he sayd vnto þe wyf'
Dame quod he. god ȝiue ȝow good lyf'
ȝe han her touchid al so mot' I the
In scole matier gret' difficulte 1272
ȝe han sayd mochel þing' right' wel I say [*leaf* 103]
But' dame right' as we ryden by þe way
Vs needeþ nouȝt' but' for to speke of' game
And lete auctorites in goddes name 1276
To preching' and to scoles of' clergie /
But' if' it' like to þis companye /
I wil ȝow of' a sompnour telle a game
Par de ȝe may wel knowe by þe name 1280
That' of' a sompnour may no good be sayd
I pray ȝow þat' noon of' ȝow be euel a-payd
A Sompnour is a renner vp and doun
wiþ maundeme*n*tȝ for fornicacio*u*n 1284
And is y-bete at' euery tounes eende /
Our oste spak' / a sir ȝe schold been heende /
And curteys as a man of' ȝour estaat'
In company we wol haue no debaat' 1288
Telleþ ȝour tale and let' þe sompno*ur* be
Nay quoþ þe sompnour let him say to me
what' so him list' whan it' comeþ to my lot'
By god I schal him quyten euery grot' 1292
I schal him telle which a gret' honour
Is to ben a fals flateryng' lymytour [*Lines* 1307-8 *follow wrongly here in the Six Texts.*]
And his offis I schal him telle I-wis
Our host' answerd and sayd þe sompno*ur* þis 1296
And after þis he sayd vnto þe Frere
Telleþ forþ ȝour tale my maister deere

[*No gap in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat.

Whilom þer was duellyng' in my countre
An erchedeken a man of' gret' degre 1300
That' boldely did execucio*un*
In punyschyng' of' fornicacio*un*
Of' wicchecraft' and eek' of' Bauderye
Of' diffamacioun and auoutrie / 1304
Of' chirchereues and of' testamentes
Of' contractes and of' lak' of' sacraments
And eek' of' many anoþer cryme [*These 2 lines are misplaced, as 1295-6, in the Six Texts.*]
which nediþ not' to reherse at' þis tyme 1308
Of' vsur and of' Symony also
But' certes lecchours did he grettest' woo.
Thay schulde synge if' þay were hent' [*leaf* 103, *back*]
And smale tyþers þay were fouly schent' 1312
If' eny p*er*soun wold vpon hem pleyne
Ther might' astert/ him no pecunial peyne
For smale tyþes and for smal offrynge
he made þe poeple pitously to synge 1316
For er þe bisschop caught' him in his hook'
þay weren in þe archedeknes book'
And hadde þurgh his iurediccio*un*
Power to haue of' hem correccio*un* 1320
he had a sompnour redy to his hond
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond
Ful priuely he had his espiaile
That' taughte him wher he might' auayle 1324
he couþe spare of' lecchours oon or tuo
And techen him to four and twenty mo
For þough þis sompnour wood were as an hare
To telle his harlottry I wol not' spare 1328

For we ben out' of' here correccioun
Thay haue of' vs no iurediccioun
Ne neuer schul to terme of' alle her lyues
Peter so been þe wo*m*men of' þe styues 1332
Thay beþ I-put' out' of' oure cures
Pees with meschaunce and wiþ mesauentures
þus sayd our host' and let' him telle his tale /
Now telleþ forþ al þough þe sompno*ur* gale 1336
Ne spareþ nought' myn owne maister deere
þis false þeef' þe sompnour quoþ þe frere./
Had alway bawdes redy to his hond
As eny hauk' to lure in engelond 1340
þat' told him al þe secre þat' þay knewe
For here acqueintaunce was not' come of' newe
þay were his approwo*ur*s priuely
He took' himself' a gret profyt' þer by 1344
His maister knew nat' alway what' he wan
wiþoute maundement/ a lewed man
He couþe sompne vp peyne of' cristes curs
And þay were glad to fille wel his purs./ 1348
And make him grete festis atte nale / [*leaf* 104]
And right' as Iudas hadde purses smale /
And was a theef'. right' such a þeef' was he
his maister had not' half' his duete 1352
he was if I schal ȝiue him his laude.
A þeef' a sompnour and eek' a baude.
And he had wenches at' his retenue
That' whe*þ*ir þat' s*ir* Robert' or s*ir* hughe 1356
Or Iak' or Rauf' or who-so þat' it were
That' lay by hem þay told it in his eere
Thus was þe wenche and he of' oon assent
And he wold fecche a feyned maundement 1360
And sompne hem to chapitre boþe tuo
And pyle þe man and let' þe wenche go
Than wold he sayn I schal frend for þy sake
Don strike þe out' of' oure l*ett*res blake 1364

The þar no more as in þis cas trauayle
I am þy frend þer I þe may avayle
Certeynly he knew of' bribours mo
Than possible is to telle in ȝeres tuo 1368
For in þis world nys dogge for þe bowe
Þat' can an hurt' deer from an hol y-knowe
Bet' þan þis sompno*ur* knew a leccheour
Or auoutier or ellis a paramour 1372
And for þat' was þe fruyt' of' al his rent'
Therfore þer on he set' al his entent'
And so bifel þat' oones on a day
This sompno*ur* euer wayting' on his pray 1376
Rod forth to sompne a widew and old ribibe
Feynyng' a cause for he wolde bribe
And happed þat' he say bifore him ryde
A gay ȝeman vnder a forest' syde 1380
A bow he bar and arwes bright' and kene
He had vpon a courtepy of' grene
An hat' vpon his heed wiþ frenges blake
Sir quod þis sompnour heyl and wel ou*er*take 1384
welcome quod he and euery good felawe
whider ridestow vnder þis grene schawe
Sayde þis ȝiman wiltow fer to day [*leaf* 104, *back*]
This sompnour answerd and sayde nay 1388
Her faste by quod he is myn entent
To ryden for to reysen vp a rent
That' longith to my lordes duete
Artow þan a bayely quod he / 1392
He durste not' for verray filth and schame
Sayn þat' he was a sompno*ur* for þe name
De par dieux quod þe ȝeman lieue bro*þer*
Thou art' a bayły . and I am another 1396
I am vnknowen as in þis contre
Of' þin acqueintance I wol praye þe
And eek' of' broþerheed it' ȝow lest'
I haue gold and siluer in my chest' 1400

If that þe happe come in to oure schire
Al schal be þin right as þou wolt desire
G*ra*unt m*er*cy quod þis sompnour by my faith /
Euerich in otheres hond his trouthe laith 1404
For to be sworne bre*þer*en til þay deyen
In daliaunce forþ þay ride and pleyen
This Sompnour which þat was as ful of iangles
As ful of venym ben þese wery-angles 1408
And euer enquering vpon euery þing
Broþer quod he wher now is ȝour dwellyng
Anoþ*er* day if þat I schuld ȝow seeche
This ȝiman him answerd in softe speche 1412
Broþer quod he fer in þe norþ contre
wher as I hope somtyme I schal þe se
Er we depart I schal þe so wel wisse
That of myn hous ne schaltow neuer misse 1416
Now broþer quod þis sompno*ur* I ȝow pray
Teche me whil þat we ryden by þe way
Syn þat ȝe ben a baily as am I
Som subtilte as tel me faithfully 1420
In myn office. how þat I may wynne.
And spare not for consciens or for synne /
But as my broþer tel me how do ȝe
Now by my trouthe brothir myn sayd he / 1424
As I schal telle þe a faithful tale [*leaf* 105]
My wages ben ful streyt and eek ful smale
My lord to me is streyt and daungerous
And myn office is ful laborous 1428
And þerfor by extorcio*u*ns I lyue
For soþ I take al þat men wil me ȝiue
Algate by sleighte or by violence
Fro ȝer to ȝer I wynne my despence 1432
I can no better telle faithfully
Now certes quod þis sompnour so fare I
I spare not to take god it woot
But if it be to heuy or to hoot 1436

what' I may gete. in counseil priuely
No more consciens of' þat' haue I
Nere myn extorcions I might' not' lyuen
Ne of' such iapes I wil not' be schriuen 1440
Stomak' ne conscience. know I noon
I schrew þes schriftefadres euerychoon
wel be we met' by god and by seint' Iame
But' leue broþer telle me þy name 1444
Quod þis sompno*ur* in þis mene while
This ȝeman gan a litel for to smyle
Broþir quod he woltow þat' I þe telle
I am a feend my dwellyng' is in helle 1448
And her I ryde about' my purchasyng'
To wite wher me*n* wol ȝiue me eny þing'
My purchas is þeffect of' al my rent
loke how þou ridest' for þe same entent/ 1452
To wynne good þou rekkist' neuer how
Right' so fare I for ryde I wolde now
vnto þe worldes ende for a pray
A quod þe sompnour be*n*edicite what' ȝe say 1456
I wende ȝe were a ȝeman trewely
ȝe han a mannes schap as wel as I
haue ȝe a figure. þan determinate
In helle þer ȝe ben in ȝour estate / 1460
Nay certeynly quod he þer haue we non
But' whan vs likith we can make vs on
Or ellis make ȝow seme þat' we ben schape [*leaf* 105, *back*]
Som tyme like a man or like an ape 1464
Or lik' aungel can I ryde or go
It' is no wonder þing' þough it be so
A lousy iogelour can decyue þe
And p*ar*fay ȝit / can I more craft' þan he 1468
¶ why quod þis sompno*ur* ryde ȝe þan or goon
In sondry wyse and nouȝt' alway in oon
For quod he we wol vs in such forme make
As most' abil is. oure pray to take / 1472

what makith ȝow to haue al þis labour
Ful many a cause lieue sir sompnour
Sayde þis feend. but al þing hath a tyme
þe day is schort and it is passed prime 1476
And ȝit ne wan I no þing in þis day
I wol entent to wynnyng if I may
And not entende oure þinges to declare /
For broþer myn þy wit is al to bare 1480
To vnderstond al þough I told hem þe
For but þou axid. whi laboure we /
For som tyme we ben goddis instrumentes
And menes to don his comaundementes 1484
whan þat him list vpon his creatures
In diuers act. and in diuers figures
wiþouten him we haue no might certeyn
If þat him liste. stonde þer ageyn 1488
And som tyme at our prayer haue we leeue
Only þe body and not þe soule greue /
witnes on Iope whom we dide ful wo
And somtyme haue we might of boþe tuo 1492
This is to say of body and soule eeke
And som tyme be we suffred for to seeke
vpon a man and doon his soule vnrest/
And not his body and al is for þe best 1496
whan he wiþstondith oure temptacioun
It is a cause of his sauacioun
Al be it so. it was nought oure entent
he schuld be sauf. but þat we wold him hent 1500
And som tyme we · ben seruaunt vnto man [leaf 106]
As to therchebisschope seynt Dunstan
And to thapostolis seruaunt was I
ȝit tel me quod þe sompnour faithfully 1504
Make ȝe ȝow. newe bodies alway
Of elementȝ. þe fend answerde nay
Som tyme we feyne. and somtyme we ryse
wiþ dede bodies. in ful wonder wyse 1508

And speke renably. and as fair and wel
As to þe Phitonissa dede Samuel
And ȝit' wol somme say. it' was not' he
I do no fors. of' ȝour diuinite 1512
But' oon þing' warne I þe I wol not' iape.
þou wilt' algates wite how we ben schape.
Thow schalt' her afterward my broþer deere
Com wher þe nedith no þing' for to leere 1516
For thou schalt' by þin oughn experience
Conne in a chayer reden of' þis sentence
Bet' þan virgile whils he was on lyue /
Or Daunt' also / now let' vs ryde blyue 1520
For I wol holde company with þe
Til it' be so þat' þou forsake me
Nay quod þe sompnour þat' schal nought' betyde
I am a ȝiman þat' knowen is ful wyde 1524
My trouþe wol I hold as in þis caas
For þough þou be þe deuyl Sathanas
My trouþe wol I holde. to þe my broþer
As I am swore. and ech of' vs to oþer 1528
For to be trewe breþeren in þis caas
For boþe we goon abouten oure purchas
Tak' þou þi part' and þat' men wil þe ȝyuen
And I schal myn þus may we boþe lyuen 1532
And if' eny of' us. haue more þan oþer
Let' him be trewe. and part' it wiþ his broþer
I graunte quod þe deuel by my fay /
And wiþ þat' word þay riden forth her way 1536
And right' at' þentryng' of' a townes ende /
To which þis sompnour schope him for to wende
Thay seigh a cart' that' chargid was with hay [leaf 106, back]
which þat' a carter drof' forþ in his way / 1540
Deep was þe way for which þe carte stood
This carter smoot' and cryde as he wer wood
hayt'. brok'. hayt'. scot'. / what' spare ȝe for þe stoones
þe fend quod he. ȝow fech body and bones 1544

As ferforthly as euer wer ȝe folid
So moche wo as I haue with ȝow tholid
The deuyl haue al boþe cart'. and hors and hay
This sompno*ur* sayde her schal we se play 1548
And ner þe feend he drough as nouȝt' ne were
Ful priuely and rouned in his eere
herke my broþer herke by þi faith
Ne herest' nought' þou. what' þe carter saith 1552
hent' it anoon · for he haþ ȝiuen it þe
boþe hay and caples and eek' his cart' p*ar*de
¶ Nay quod þe deuyl god wot' neuer a del
It' is nought' his entente trustith wel 1556
Ask' it' þiself' if' þou not' trowist' me
Or ellis stint' a while and þou schalt' se
This carter thakketh his hors vpon the croupe
And þay bygon to drawen and to stowpe 1560
hayt' now quod he ther. Ihu *cri*st' ȝow blesse
And al his hondwerk' boþe more and lesse
That' was wel twight' myn oughne lyard boy
I pray god saue þy body and seint loy 1564
Now is my cart' out' of' þe sloo p*ar* de
Lo broþer quod þo feend what' told I þe
Her may ȝe seen. myn owne deere broþer
The carter spak' oon þing'. and þought' anoþer 1568
Let' vs go forth. abouten our viage
hier wynne I noþing' vpon cariage
whan þat' þay comen som what' out of' toune
This sompnour to his broþir gan to roune 1572
Brothir quod he. her wonyth an old rebekke
That' had almost'. as lief' to leese hir necke /
As for to ȝiue a peny of' hir good
I wolf' pens þough þat' sche go wood 1576
Or I wol somone hir to oure office [*leaf* 107]
And ȝit' god wot' I know of' hir no vice
But' for þou canst' not' as in þis contre
wynne þy cost' tak/ her ensample of' me 1580

This sompnour clapped at þe widowes gate
Com out quod he þou olde viritrate
I trowe þou hast som frere or prest wiþ þe
who clappith þer sayd þis widow benedicite 1584
God saue ȝow sir. what is ȝour swete wille
I haue quod he. a somonaunce of a bille
vp payne of cursyng loke þat þou be
To morwe biforn our erchedeknes kne 1588
To answer to þe court of certeyn þinges
Now quod sche Ihū crist and king of kinges
So wisly helpe me as I ne may
I haue ben seek and þat ful many a day 1592
I may not goon so fer quod sche ne ryde
But I be deed so prikith it in my syde
May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnour
And answer þer. by my procuratour 1596
To suche þing as. men wol oppose me
ȝis quod þis sompnour. pay anoon let se
Twelf pens to me and I þe wil acquite
I schal no profyt haue þer-by but lite 1600
My mayster hath þe profyt and not I
Com of and let me ryden hastily
ȝif me my twelf pens I may no lenger tary
Twelf pens quod sche. now lady seinte mary 1604
So wisly help me. out of care and synne
þis wyde world. þough þat I schulde wynne
Ne haue I not · xij · pens wiþinne myn hold
ȝe knowen wel þat I am pore and old 1608
kithe ȝoure almes on me pore wrecche
Nay þan quod he. þe foule fend me fecche
If I þexcuse þough þou schalt be spilt
Allas quod sche god wot I haue no gilt 1612
Pay me quod he. or by þe swet seint Anne
As I wol bere away þy newe panne
For dette which þou owest me of old [*leaf* 107, *back*]
whan þat þou madest þin housbond cokewold 1616

I payd at' hom for þi correccioun
Thou lixt' quod sche by my sauacio*un*
Ne was I neuer er now wydow ne wyf'
Somound vnto ȝour court/ in al my lyf' 1620
Ne neuer I was but' of' my body trewe
vnto þe deuel rough and blak' of' hiewe
ȝiue I þy body and þe panne also
And whan þe deuyl herd hir curse so 1624
vpon his knees he sayd in þis manere
Now mabely myn owne modir deere
Is þis ȝour wil in ernest' þat/ ȝe seye
þe deuel quod he fecche him er he deye 1628
And panne and al but' he wol him repente
Nay olde stot' þat' is not/ myn entente /
Quod þis sompno*ur* to repente me
For eny þing' þat' I haue had of' þe 1632
I wold I had þy smok' and euery cloth
Now broþir quod þe deuyl be not' wroþ
Thy body and þis panne is myn by right
Thou schalt' wiþ me to helle ȝit to night 1636
wher þou schalt' knowen of' our priuete
More þan a maister of' diuinite
And wiþ þat' word þe foule fend him hente
Body and soule he wiþ þe deuyl wente 1640
wher as þe sompno*ur*s han her heritage
And god þat' maked after his ymage
Mankynde saue and gyde vs all*e* and some
And leene þis sompnour good man to bycome 1644
lordyngs I couþ han. told ȝow quod þe frere
had I had leysir for þis sompnour here
After þe text' of' crist' powel and Ion
And of' oþer doctours many oon 1648
Such peynes þat' our herte might' agrise
Al be it' so no tonge may deuyse /
Though þat' I might' a þousand wynter telle
The peyn of' þilke cursed hous of' helle 1652

But' for to kepe vs fro þat' cursed place [*leaf* 108]
wakiþ and prayeth iħu for his grace
So kepe vs fro þe temptour Sathanas
herknith þis word. beþ war as in þis cas 1656
The lyoun syt' in his awayt' alway
To slen þe Innocent' if' þat' he may
Disposith ȝoure hertes to wiþstonde
The fend þat' wolde make ȝow þral and bonde / 1660
He may not' tempte ȝow ouer ȝour mighť
For crist' wol be ȝour champio*un* and knighť
And prayeth þat' oure sompno*ur* him repente
Of' his mys dede. er þat' þe fend him hente. 1664

¶ Here endith þe frere his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And here begynneth þe sompno*ur* his p*r*ologe

This sompnour in his styrop vp he stood
vpon þe Frere his herte was so wood
That' lyk' an aspen leef/ he quok' for Ire
lordyngs quod he. but' oon þing' I desire 1668
I ȝow biseke þat' of' ȝour curtesye
Syn ȝe han herd þis false frere lye
As suffrith me I may my tale telle
This frere bosteth þat' he knowith helle 1672
And god it' wot'. þat' is litil wonder
Freres and feendes been but' litel asonder
For pardy ȝe han often tyme herd telle /
how þat' a frere rauyscht' was to helle 1676
In spirit ones by a visio*un*
And as an aungel. lad him vp and do*un*
To schewen him þe peynes þat' þer were
In al þe place saugh he not' a frere 1680
Of' oþer folk' he saugh ynowe in wo
vnto þis aungel spak' þis frere þo
Now sire quod he han freres such a *grace*
That' noon of' hem schal comen in þis place 1684
Ȝis quod þis aungil many a mylioun
And vnto Sathanas he lad him doun
And now haþ sathanas saith he a tayl
Broder þan of' a Carrik' is þe sayl 1688
hold vp þy tayl þou Sathanas quod he [*leaf* 108, *back*]
Schew forth þyn ars and let þe frere se
wher is þe nest' of' freres in þis place
And er þan half' a forlong' way of' space 1692

Right' so as bees swarmen out' of' an hyue
Out' of' þe deueles ers þay gonne dryue
Twenty þousand freres on a route
And þorugh out' helle swarmed al aboute 1696
And comen as fast' as þay may goon
And in his ers þay crepen euerich oon ·
he clappid his tayl agayn and lay ful stille
This frere whan he loked had his fille 1700
Vpon þe torment' of' þis sory place
his spirit' god restored of' his grace
vnto his body agayn and he awook'
But' naþeles for fere ȝit' he quook' 1704
So was þe deueles ers ȝit in his mynde
That' is his heritage of' verray kynde/
God saue ȝow alle saue þis cursed frere
My proloug' wol I ende in þis manere 1708

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat'

LOrdyngs þer is. in Engelond I gesse
A mersschly lond called holdernesse
In which þer went' a lymytour aboute
To preche and eek to begge it' is no doubte 1712
And so bifel it. on a day þis frere
had preched at' a chirch in his manere
And specially abouen euery þing'
Excited he þe poepul in his preching' 1716
To trentals and to ȝiue for goddis sake
wher that' men mighten holy soules make
Ther as diuine seruys is honoured
Nought' þer as it is wasted and deuoured 1720
Neither it' needeþ not' for to be ȝiue
As to possessioneres þat' mow lyue
Thanked be god in wele and abundaunce
Trentals sayd he delyuereth fro penaunce 1724
her frendes soules as wel eld as ȝonge
ȝe whanne þat' þay hastily ben songe
Nought' for to hold a prest' iolif' and gay [*leaf* 100]
he syngith not' but' oon masse in a day 1728
Delyuerith out' quod he þe soules
Ful hard it' is wiþ fleischhok' or with oules
To ben y-clawed. or brend or I-bake
Now speed ȝow hastily for cristes sake 1732
And whan þis frere had sayd al his entent
with Qui cu*m* p*at*re. forþ he went
whan folk' in chirch had ȝiue him what' hem lest'
he went' his way no lenger wold he rest' 1736

with scrip and pyked staf' y-touked hye
In euery hous and gan to pore and prye
And beggyd mele or chese or ellis corn
his felaw had a staf' typped with horn 1740
A payr of' tablis al of' yuory
And a poyntel y-polischt' fetisly
And wroot' þe names alway as he stood
Of' alle folk' that' ȝaf' him eny good 1744
Ascaunce þat' he wolde for hem preye
ȝif' vs a busshel. whet' or malt' or reye
A goddes kichil or a trip of' chese
Or elles what' ȝow list' we may not' chese 1748
A goddes halpeny or a masse peny
Or ȝif' vs of' ȝoure braune if' ȝe haue eny
A dagoun of' ȝour blanket' leeue dame
Oure suster deer. lo her I write ȝour name 1752
Bacoun or beef' or such þing' as we fynde
A stourdy harlot' ay went hem by hynde
That' was her hostis man and bar a sak'
And what' men ȝaf' hem layd it' on his bak' 1756
And whan þat he was out atte dore anoon
he planed out þe names eu*er*ychoon
That' he biforn had writen in his tablis
He serued hem wiþ nyfles and wiþ fablis 1760
Nay þer þou lixt' þou sompno*ur* sayd þe frere
Pees quod our host' for cristes moder deere
Tel forþ þy tale and spare it' not at al
So thriue I quod þe sompnour so I schal 1764
So long' he wente hous by hous til he [*leaf* 109, *back*]
Cam til an hous þer he was wont' to be
Refresshid mor þan in an hundrid placis.
Syk' lay þe housbond ma*n* whos þat' þe place is. 1768
Bedred vpon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic quod he O thomas frend good day
Sayde þis frere al curteysly and softe /
O. Thomas god ȝeld it' ȝow ful ofte 1772

haue I vpon þis bench I-fare ful wel
her haue I eten many a mery mel
And fro þe bench he drof' away þe cat'
And layd a-doun his potent' and his hat' 1776
And eek' his scrip and set' him soft' a-doun
his felaw was go walkid in þe toun
Forth with his knaue to þe ostelrye /
wher as he schop him þilke night' to lye 1780
O deere maister quod þe seeke man
how haue ȝe fare siþþe march bygan
I saygh ȝow nouȝt' þis fourtenight' or more
God wot' quod he labord haue I ful sore 1784
And specially for þy saluacio*un*
haue I sayd many a precious orisoun
And for myn oþer frendes god hem blesse /
I haue to day ben at' your chirche at' messe 1788
And sayd a sermo*un* after my simple wit'
Nought' al after þe text' of' holy wryt'
For it' is hard for ȝow as I suppose
And þerfor wil I teche ȝow ay þe glose 1792
Glosyng' is a ful glorious þing' certayn
For letter sleþ so as we clerkes sayn
þer haue I taught' hem to be chariteable
And spend her good. þer it is resonable 1796
And þer I seigh our dame wher is sche /
ȝond in þe ȝerd I trowe þat' sche be
Sayde þis man. and sche wil come anoon
¶ Ey mayster welcome be ȝe by seint' Iohn 1800
Sayde þis wyf' how fare ȝe hertily
þe frere ariseþ vp ful curteysly
And hir embracith in his armes narwe [*leaf* 110
And kist' hir swete. and chirkith as a sparwe! 1804
with his lippes dame quod he right' wel.
As he þat' is ȝour s*er*uaunt' eu*er*y del
Thankyd be god þat' ȝow ȝaf' soule and lif'
ȝit' saugh I not' þis day so fair a wyf' 1808

In al þe chirche god so saue me.
ȝe God amend defautes sir quod sche /
Algates welcome be ȝe by my fay
Graunt' mercy dame þis haue I found alway 1812
But' of' ȝour grete goodnes by ȝoure leue
I wolde pray ȝow þat' ȝe ȝow not' greeue
I wil wiþ Thom*as* speke a litel þrowe
These curates ben ful negligent' and slowe 1816
To grope tendurly a conscience
In schrift' and preching' is my diligence
Study in petres wordes and in poules
And walk' and fissche cristen mennes soules 1820
To ȝelde Iħu crist' his p*ro*pre rent
To spreden his word is al myn entent
Now by ȝour leue o deere sire quod sche
Chyd him right' wel for seinte trinite 1824
he is as angry as a pissemyre
Though þat' he haue al þat he can desire
Though I him wrye on night' and make him warm
And ouer him lay my leg' oþer myn arm 1828
he groneth lik' our boor that' lith in sty.
Othir disport' of' him right' noon haue I
I may please him in no maner caas.
O Thom*as* Ieo vo*us* dy Thomas Thomas. 1832
This makþ þe feend. þis moste ben amendid
Ire is a þing' þat' highe god defendid
And þer of' wold I speke a word or tuo
Now maister quod þe wyf' er þat' I go / 1836
what' wil ȝe dyne. I wil go þer aboute
Now dame quod he Ieo vo*us* dy saunȝ doute
haue I not' of' a capoun but' þe lyuere
And of' ȝour softe brede but' a schiuere 1840
And after þat' a rostyd pigges heed [*leaf* 110, *back*]
But' þat' I wold for me no best' were deed
Than had I wiþ ȝow homly suffisaunce
I am a man of' litel sustinaunce 1844

My spirit haþ his fostryng' on þe bible /
þe body is ay so redy and penyble
To wake þat' my stomak' is destroyed
I pray ȝow dame þat' ȝe be not' anoyed 1848
For I so frendly ȝow my counseil schewe
By I nold not' telle it but' a fewe /
Now sir quod sche but' o word er I go
My child is deed wiþinne þise wykes tuo 1852
Soon after þat' ȝe went' out' of' þis toun
his deth saugh̄ I by reuelacio*un*
Sayde þis frere at' hoom in oure dort*our*
I dar wel sayn er þat' half' an hour 1856
After his deth. I seigh̄ him born to blisse
In myn auysioun so god me wisse.
So did our sextein. and our fermerere
That' han ben trewe freres many a ȝere 1860
þay may now god be thanked of' his lone
Maken her Iubile. and walk' alloone
But' vp I roos and al our couent' eeke
With many a teere trilling' on my cheeke 1864
Te deu*m* was our song' and no þing' ellis
wiþouten noys or clateryng' of' bellis
Saue þat' to crist' I sayd an orisoun
Thankyng' him of' my reuelacio*un* 1868
For sire and dame trustith me right' wel
Our orisouns ben more effectuel
And more we se of' goddis secre þinges
Than borel folk' alþough þat' þay ben kinges 1872
we lyue in pouert' and in abstinence
And borel folk' in riches and dispence
Of' mete and drink' and in her ful delyt
we han al þis worldes delit' in despyt' 1876
lazar and Diues lyueden diuersely
And diuers guerdo*un* hadde þay þerby
who-so wol praye. faste. and be clene. [*leaf* 111]
And fatte his soule and make his body lene 1880

we faren as saith þapostil cloþ and foode
Sufficeþ vs . þough þay ben not' goode
The clennes and þe fastyng' of' vs freres
Makith þat' crist' acceptith oure prayeres 1884
lo moyses fourty dayes and fourty night'
Fasted er þat' þe highe god of' might'
Spak' wiþ him in . þe mount of' Synay
with empty wombe fastyng' many a day 1888
Receyued he þe lawe þat' was writen
with goddis fynger and holy wel ȝe w
In mou*n*t' oreb or he had eny speche
with highe god þat' is oure lyues leche 1892
He fastid and was in contemplacio*un*
Aron þat' had þe temple in gouernacio*un*
And eek' þe oþer prestes eu*er*ychoon
In to þe temple whan þay schulden goon 1896
To preye for þe poeple and doon seruise
Thay nolden drinken · in no maner wise /
No drynke which þat' dronke might' hem make /
But' þer in abstinence prey and wake 1900
lest' þat' þay dedin . tak' heed what' I say
But' þay ben sobre þat' for þe pepul pray
war þat' I say no mor . for it' suffisith
Oure lord Iħu as oure lore deuysith 1904
ȝaf' vs ensampil of' fastyng' and prayeres
þerfore we mendina*un*tȝ we cely freres
Ben wedded to pouert' and to continence
To charite · humblesse and abstinence 1908
To p*er*secucio*un* for rightwisnesse
To wepyng' misericord and clennesse
And þ*er*for may ȝe seen þat' oure prayeres
I speke of' vs we mendeaunts . we freres 1912
Ben to þe hihe god mor acceptable
Than ȝoures with ȝour festis at' ȝour table
Fro p*ar*adis first' if' I schal not' lye
was man out' chaced for his glotonye 1916

And chast' was man in paradis certeyn [*leaf* 111, *back*]
But now herk/ thom*as*. what I schal þe seyn
I ne haue no tixt' of' it as I suppose /
But' I schal fynd it in a maner glose / 1920
That' specially our swete lord ihc'
Spak' þis by freres whan he sayde þus
Blessed be þay þat' pouer in spirit ben
And so forþ in þe gospel ȝe may seen 1924
wheþer it' be likir oure p*r*ofessio*u*n.
Or heris þat' swymmen in possessio*u*n
Fy on her pomp and on her glotenye
And on her lewydnesse I hem defye 1928
Me þinkith þay ben lik' Iouynian
Fat' as a whal and walken as a swan
Al vinolent' as botel in þe spence
her prayer is of' ful gret' reu*e*rence 1932
whan þay for soules sayn þe psalm of' dauid
lo boef' þay say. Cor meum eructauit
who folwith cristes gospel and his fore
But' we þat' humble ben and chast' and pore 1936
werkers of' goddes word and auditours
Ther-for right' as an hauk' vpon a sours
vpspringeth in to þaer right' so p*ra*yeres
Of' charitabil and chaste busy freres 1940
Maken her sours to goddis eeres tuo
Thomas thomas so mote I ryde or go
And by þat' lord þat' clepid is seint' Iue
Ner þou oure broþer schuldestow neuer þriue 1944
In oure chapitre pray we day and night'
To crist' þat' he þe sende hele and might'
Thy body for to welden hastily
God wot' quod he þer-of' nought' feele I. 1948
As help me crist' as I in fewe ȝeeres
haue spendid vpon many diu*er*s freres
Ful many a pound ȝit' fare I neuer þe bet'
Certeyn my good haue I almost' byset/ 1952

Far wel my gold for it' is almost' a go
The frere answerd // O thom*as* dostow so
what' needith ȝow dyuerse freres seche [*leaf* 112]
what' needith him þat' haþ a p*ar*fyt' leche / 1956
To sechen oþir leches in þe toun
ȝoure inconstance is ȝoure confusio*un*
holde ȝe þan me or oure couent
To praye for ȝow insufficient 1960
Thomas þat' iape is not' worth a myte
ȝoure malady is for we haue to lite
¶ A ȝiue þat' couent' half' a quarter otes
A ȝiue þat' couent' four and twenty grotes 1964
A ȝiue þat' frere a peny and let' him go.
Nay nay thomas. it' may nought' be so
what' is a ferthing worth depart' in tuelue
lo ech þing' þat' is ooned in himselue 1968
Is more strong' þan whan it' is to-skatrid
Thomas of' me þou schalt' not' ben y-flatrid
Thow woldist' haue our labour al for nought
The hihe god þat' al this world hath wrought' 1972
Saith þat' a werkma*n* is worþy his hyre
Thom*as* nouȝt' of' ȝour tresor I desire
For my self'. but' for that' oure couent/
To pray for ȝow is ay so diligent 1976
And for to buylden cristes holy chirche
Thomas if' ȝe wil lerne for to wirche /
Of' buyldyng' vp on chirches may ȝe fynde
If' it be good in thom*as* lyf' of' ynde 1980
ȝe lye her ful. of' anger and of' Ire
wiþ which þe deuel set' ȝour hert' on fuyre
And chyden her þe holy Innocent'
ȝour wyf' þat' is. so meke and pacient / 1984
And þ*er*for trow me thomas if' þou list'
Ne stryue nought' wiþ þy wif' as for þi best'
And ber þis word away now by þy faith
Touchinge such þing' lo þe wise man saith 1988

¶ wiþinne þin hous be þou no lyoun
To þy subiects. do noon oppressioun
Ne make þyn acqueyntis fro þe fle
And ȝit' thomas eftsons I charge þe / 1992
Be war for hir þat' in þy bosom slepith [*leaf* 112, *back*]
war for þe serpent þat' so priuely crepith
vnder þe gras and styngith priuely
Be war my sone and werk' paciently 1996
For twenty þousend men han lost' her lyues
For stryuyng' wiþ her lemmans and her wyues.
Now syns ȝe han so holy and meeke a wif'
what' nedith ȝow thomas to make strif' 2000
Ther nys I-wis no serpent' so cruel
when men trede on his tail ne half' so fel
As woman is when sche haþ caught' an Ire
Vengeans is þanne. al þat' þay desire 2004
Schortly may no man by rym and vers [*Spurious*] 2004*b*
Tellen her thoughtes þay ben so dyuers [„] 2004*c*
Ire is a þing' oon þe grete of' seuene
Abhominable to þe god of' heuene
And to himself' it is destruccioun
This euery lewed vicory or parsoun 2008
Can say how Ire engendrith homicide
Ire is in soth executour of' pride
I couþe of' Ire seyn so moche sorwe
My tale schulde laste til to morwe 2012
Ire is þe grate of' synne as saith þe wise [*Spurious*] 2012*b*
To fle þer fro ech man schuld him deuyse [„] 2012*c*
And þer-for pray I god boþe day and night'
An Irous man god send him litil might'
It' is greet' harm. and also gret' pite
To set' an Irous man in high degre 2016
¶ whilom þer was an Irous potestate
As seith senek' þat' duryng' his estaat' /
vpon a day out/ riden knightes tuo
And as fortune wolde right' as it' were so 2020
That' oon of' hem cam home þat' oþer nouȝt'
Anoon þe knight' bifore the iuge is brouȝt'
That' sayde þus. þou hast' þy felaw slayn
For which I deme þe to deth certayn 2024

And to anothir knight' comaundid he /
Go lede him to þe deth I charge þe /
And happed as þay wente by þe weye [leaf 113]
Toward þe place þer he schulde deye 2028
The knight' com which . men wend hadde be deed
Than þoughten þay it' were þe beste reed
To lede hem boþe to þe iuge agayn
Thay sayden lord þe knight' haþ not' slayn 2032
his felaw lo . heer he stont' hool on lyue
ȝe schal be deed quod he so mote I þriue
That' is to sayn boþe oon . tuo . and þre
And to þe firste knyȝt' right' þus spak' he 2036
I deme þe þou most' algate be deed
Than þoughte þay it' were þe beste rede [*Spurious*] 2037*b*
To lede him forþ in to a fair mede [„] 2037*c*
And quod þe iuge also þou most' lese þin heed
For þou art' cause why þy felaw deyth
And to þe þridde felaw þus he seith 2040
Thou hast' nought' doon þat' I comaundid þe
And þus he let' don sle hem alle þre
Irous Cambises was eek' dronkelewe
And ay delited him to ben a schrewe 2044
And so bifel a lord of' his meigne
That' loued vertues and eek/ moralite
Sayd on a day bitwix hem tuo right' þus
A lord is lost' if' he be vicious 2048
An Irous man is lik' a frentik' best' [*Spurious*] 2048*b*
In which þer is of' wisdom noon arrest' [„] 2048*c*
And dronkenes is eek' a foul record
Of any man and namly of' a lord
Ther is ful many eyȝe and many an eere
Awaytand on a lord and he not' where 2052
For goddes loue drynk' more attemperelly
wyn makith man to lese wrecchedly
his mynde and eek . his lymes euerichoon
The reuers schaltow seen quod he anoon 2056
And proue it' by þin owne experience
That' wyn ne doþ to folk' non such offence
Ther is no wyn . byreueth me my wit
Of' hond of' foot' ne of' myn eyȝe sight' 2060

And for despyt' he dronke moche more [*leaf* 113, *back*]
An hundrid part' þan he had doon byfore
And right' anoon þis irous cursid wrecche /
Let' þis knightes sone anoon biforn him fecche 2064
Comaundyng' hem þay schuld biforn him stonde
And sodeinly he took' his bowe on honde
And vp þe streng' he pulled to his eere
And wiþ an arwe he slough þe child right' þere 2068
Now wheþir haue I a sikur hond or noon
Quod he is al my mynde and might' agoon
hath wyn byreuyd me myn eye sight'
what' schuld I telle þe answer of' þe knight 2072
his sone was slayn þer is no more to say
Be war *þer*for. wiþ lordes how ȝe play
Syngith placebo. and I schal if' I can
But' if' it' be. vnto a pore man 2076
To a pore man men schuld his vices telle
But' not' to a lord þey he schuld go to helle
lo Irous Cirus þilke P*er*cien
how he destruyed þe ryuer of' Gysen 2080
For þat' an hors of' his was dreynt *þer* Inne.
whan þat' he wente Babiloyne to wynne
he made þat' þe ryuer was so smal
þat' wo*m*men mighte wade it ouer al 2084
lo what' sayde he þat' so wel teche can
Ne be no felaw. to an irous man
Ne with no wood man walke by þe way
lest' þe repent I wol no lenger say 2088
Now thomas leue broþer leue þin Ire
Thow schalt' me fynde as iust' as is a squire
Thyn anger doth þe al to sore smerte
hald not' þe deueles knyf' alway at' þyn herte 2092
But' schewe to me al þy confessio*u*n
Nay quod þis syke man by seynt symo*u*n
I haue ben schriuen þis day of' my curate
I haue him told holly al myn estate/ 2096

Nedith no more to speken of' it saith he /
But' if' me list' of' myn humilite.
ȝif' me þan of' þy good to make our cloyster [leaf 114]
Quod he for many a muscle and many an oyster 2100
haþ ben oure foode our Cloyster to arreyse
whan oþer men han ben ful wel at' eyse
And ȝit' god wot' vnnethe þe foundement'
Parformed is ne of' oure pauyment' 2104
Is nought' a tyle ȝit' wiþinne our wones
By god we owe ȝit' fourty pound for stones
Now help Thomas for him þat' harewed helle
Or elles moote we oure bookes selle 2108
And ȝif' ȝow lakke oure predicacioun
Thanne goþ þe world al to destruccioun
For who-so wold vs fro þe world byreue
So god me saue Thomas by ȝoure leue 2112
he wolde byreue out' of' þis world þe sonne
For who can teche. and werken as we conne
And þis is not' of' litel tyme quod he
But' siþþen Elye was her or ele 2116
han freres ben fynde I of' record
In charite I-þanked be oure lord
Now Thomas help for seynte charite
A-doun he sette him anoon on his kne 2120
This sike man wex welneigh wood for Ire
he wolde þat' þe frere had ben on fuyre
with his fals dissimulacioun
Such þing' as is in my possessioun 2124
Quod he þat' may I ȝeue ȝow and noon oþer
Ȝe sayn me þus how þat' I am ȝour broþer
Ȝe certes quod þe frere trusteth wel
I took' our dame þe letter vnder oure sel 2128
Now wel quod he and som what' schal I ȝiue
Vnto ȝour holy couent whils þat' I lyue
And in þyn hond þou schalt' it' haue anoon
On þis condicioun and oþer noon 2132

That þou departt it so my deere broþer
That euery frere haue as moche as oþer
Thy schaltow swere on þy professioun
wiþouten fraude or cauillacioun 2136
I swere it quod þis frere vpon my faith [leaf 114, back]
And þer-with his hond in his he laith
Io her myn hond in me schal be no lak
Now þanne put þyn hond doun at my bak 2140
Sayde þis man and grope wel byhynde
Bynethe my buttok þere schaltow fynde
A þing þat I haue hud in priuete
A þought þis frere þat schal go with me / 2144
And doun his hond he launched to þe clifte
In hope for to fynde þer a ȝifte
And whan þis syke man felte þis frere
Aboute his tuel grope þer and heere 2148
Amyd his hond he lect þe freere a fart
Ther is no capul drawyng in a cart
That might haue let a fart of such a soun
The frere vpstart as doth a wood lyoun 2152
A false cherl quod he for goddes bones
This hastow in despit don for þe noones
Thou schalt abye þis fart if þat I may
his meyne which þat herd of þis affray 2156
Com lepand In and chased out þe frere
And forth he goþ wiþ a foul angry cheere
And fat his felaw þere lay his stoor
he lokid as it were a wylde boor 2160
And grynte with his teeþ so was he wroth
A stordy paas doun to þe court he goth
wher as þer wonyd a man of gret honour
To whom þat he was alway confessour 2164
This worþy man was lord of þat / village
This frere com as he were in a rage
wher þat þis lord sat etyng at his bord
Vnneþe might þe frere speke a word 2168

Til atte last' he sayde god ȝow se
This lord gan loke and sayde benedicite
What' frere Iohn what' maner world is þis /
I se wel. þat' som þing' is amys 2172
Ȝe loke as þough þe woode were ful of' þeuys
Sit' doun anoon and tel me what' ȝour gref' is
And it' schal ben amendit if' þat' I may [*leaf* 115]
I haue quod he had a despit' to day 2176
God ȝelde ȝow a-doun in ȝoure vilage
That' in þis world is noon so pore a page/
That' he nold haue abhominacio*un*
Of' þat' I haue receyued in ȝoure toun 2180
And ȝet ne greuith me no þing' so sore
As þat' þis elde cherl wiþ lokkes hore
Blasphemed haþ our holy couent' eeke
Now maister quod þis lord I ȝow biseke 2184
No maister sir quod he but seruitour
Þough I haue had in scole such honour
God likith not' þat Raby men vs calle
Neither in market neyther in ȝour large halle 2188
No fors quod he tellith me al ȝour greef
Þis frere sayd sire an odious meschief'
This day bytid is to myn ordre and to me
And so p*ar* consequens to ech degre 2192
Of' holy chirche god amend it soone
Sir quod þe lord ȝe wot' what' is to doone
Distempre ȝow nought' ȝe ben my confessour
Ȝe ben þe salt' of' þerþe and sauyour 2196
For goddes loue ȝoure pacience ȝe holde
Tel me ȝour greef' and he anoon him tolde
As ȝe han herd bifore ȝe wot' wel what'
The lady of' þat' hous ay stille sat' 2200
Til sche had herd what' þe frere sayde
Ey goddes moodir quod she blisful mayde
Is þer ought' elles tel me faithfully
Ma dame quod he how þynke ȝow þ*er*by 2204

how þat' me þynkith quod sche so god me speede
I say a cherl haþ doon a cherles deede
what' schuld I say god let' him neuer þe
His syke heed is full of' vanyte 2208
I hold him in a maner frenesye /
Ma dame quod he I-wis I schal not' lye
But' I in oþir wise may be wreke
I schal defame him ouer al wher I speke 2212
The false blasfememo*ur* þat' chargid me [*leaf* 115, *back*]
To parten þat' wil not departed be
To euery man yliche wiþ meschau*n*ce
The lord sat' stille as he were in a traunce 2216
And in his hert' he rollid vp and doun
How had þis cherl ymaginacio*un*
So schewe such a probleme to þe frere
Neuer eft' er now herd I of' such matiere 2220
I trowe þe deuel put' it in his mynde
In ars metrik / schal þer no man fynde
Biforn þis day of' such a questio*un*
who schulde make a demonstracio*un* 2224
That' eu*er*y man schuld haue a lyk' his part'
As of' a soun or of' a sauour of' a fart'
O nyce proude cherl I schrew his face
lo sires quod þe lord wiþ harde grace 2228
who euer herde of' such a þing' er now
To euery man y-like tel me how
It is impossible it may not' be
Ey nyce cherl god let' him neuer þe 2232
The romblyng' of a fart' and eu*er*y soun
Nis but' an aier reuerberacioun
And euer it' wastith lyte and lyt' away
Ther nys no man can deme by my fay / 2236
If' þat' it' were departed equally
what' lo my cherl what' lo how schrewedly
vnto my confessour to day he spak'
I hold him certeinly demoniak' 2240

Now etith ȝour mete and let' þe cherl go play /
Let him go honge himself' on deuel way /

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire. No break in the MS.*]

Now stood þe lordes squier at þe bord
That' carf' his mete and herde word by word 2244
Of' al þis þing' which þat' I of' haue sayd
My lord quod he be ȝe nouȝt' euel payd
I couþe telle for a gowne cloth
To ȝow sir frere so þat' ȝe be not' wroth 2248
How þat' þis fart' euen / departed schuld be
Among' ȝour couent' if' I comaunded be
Tel quod þe lord and þou schalt' haue anoon [*leaf* 116]
A goune cloþ by god and by seint' Iohn 2252
My lord quod he whan þat' þe wedir is fair
wiþoute wynd or p*er*tourbyng' of' ayr
let' bring' a large whel in to þis halle
But' þat' it' haue his spokes alle 2256
Twelf' spokes hath a cart whel comunly
And bring' me . xij . freres wit' ȝe why
For þrettene is a couent' as I gesse /
ȝour noble confessour her god him blesse 2260
Schal p*ar*fourn vp þe nombre of' þis couent'
Thanne schal þay knele doun by oon assent'
And to euery spokes ende in þis manere
Ful sadly lay his nose schal a frere 2264
ȝour noble confessour þer god him saue
Schal hold his nose vpright' vnder þe naue
Than schal þis churl with bely stif' and tought'
As eny tabor hider ben y-brought' 2268
And sette him on þe whele of' þis cart'
vpon þe naue and make him lete a fart
And ȝe schul seen vp p*er*il of' my lif'
By verray proef' þat' is demonstratif' 2272

That' equally þe soun of' it wol wende /
And eek' þe stynk' vnto þe spokes ende
Saue þat' þis worþy man ȝour confessour
By cause he is a man of' gret' honour 2276
Schal haue þe firste fruyt' as resoun is
The noble vsage of' freres is þis
The worthy men of' hem first' schal be serued
As certeynly he haþ it' wel deserued 2280
he hath to day taught' vs so mochil good
with preching' in þe pulpit' þer he stood
That' I may vouche sauf' I say for me
He hadde þe firste smel of' fartes þre 2284
And so wold al his couent' hardily
he berith him so fair and holily
The lord þe lady and ech man sauf' þe frere
Sayde þan Iankyn spak' in þis matiere 2288
As wel as euclide or elles protholome [*leaf* 116, *back*]
Touchand þe clerk' þay sayd þat' subtilte
An high wyt' made him speken as he spak'
he nas no fool ne no demoniak' / 2292
And Iankyn haþ I-wonne a newe goune
My tale is don. we ben almost' at' toune.
¶ Here endith the sompnours tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP E. FRAGMENT VI.

§ 1. THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe Clerk' of' Oxenford *prologe*

SIr clerk' of' Oxenford our hoste sayde
ȝe ryde as stille and coy as doþ a mayde /
were newe spoused sittyng' at' a bord
This day ne herd I of' ȝour mouth a word 4
I trowe ȝe study aboute som sophime
But' Salomon saith euery þing' hath tyme
For goddis sake as beth of' better cheere
It' is no tyme for to stody hiere 8
Tel vs som mery tale by ȝour fay
For what' man is entred vnto play
he moot' nedes vnto þat' play assent'
But' prechith not' as freres doon in lent' 12
To make vs for our olde synnes wepe
Ne þat' þy tale [1] tale make vs for to slepe
Tel vs som mery þing' of' aduentures
ȝoure termes ȝour colours and ȝour figures 16
keep hem in stoor til so be þat' ȝe endite
high style as whan þat' men to kynges write
Spekith so playn at' þis tyme we ȝow pray
That' we may vnderstonde þat' ȝe say / 20
This worþy clerk' benignely answerde /
Sir host' quod he I am vnder ȝour ȝerde
ȝe haue of' vs as now þe gouern*aun*ce /
And þerfor wol I do ȝow obeissa*un*ce 24

[1] þy *scratcht out*

Als fer as resoun askith hardily
I wil ȝow telle a tale which þat' I
lerned at' Padowe of' a worþy clerk'
As prouyd by his wordes and his werk' 28
he is now deed and nayled in his chest'
Now god ȝiue his soule wel good rest'
Fraunces petrark' þe laureat' poete [*leaf* 117]
highte þis clerk/. whos rethoriq*ue* swete 32
Enlumynd al ytail of' poetrie
As linian did of' philosophie
Or lawue or other art' particulere
But' deth þat' wol not' suffre vs duellen heere 36
But' as it' were a twyncling' of' an ye
hem boþe haþ slayn and alle schul dye
But' forth to telle of' this worþy man
That' taughte me þis tale as I first' bigan 40
I say þat' he first' with heigh stile enditith
Er he þe body of' his tale writith
A p*ro*heme in the which descriuith he
The mounde and of' Saluces þe contre 44
And spekith of' appenyne þe hulles hye
That' ben þe boundes of' al west' lombardye
And of' mount' vesulus in special
wher as þe poo out' of' a welle smal 48
Takith his firste springyng' and his sours
That' estward ay encresceth in his cours
To Emyl-ward · to ferard and to venise
The which a long' þing' were to deuyse 52
And trewely as to my Iuggement
Me thinkith it' a þing' Imp*er*tinent'
Saue þat' he wold conueyen his matiere
But' þis is þe tale which þat' ȝe schuln heere 56

¶ Explicit p*ro*hemi*um*

[*No break in the MS. here, or between the Stanzas following.*]

¶ Incipit' narrare

Ther is at' þe west / ende of' ytaile 57
Doun at' þe root' of' vesulus þe colde
A lusty playn abundaunt of' vitaile
wher many a tour and toun þou maist' byholde.
That' foundid were in tyme of' fadres olde. 61
And many anothir delitable sight'
And Saluces þis noble contray hight' 63

A marquys whilom duellid in þat' lond 64
As were his worþy eldris him bifore
And obeisaunt' ay redy to his hond
were alle his liegis bothe lesse and more [*leaf* 117, *back*]
Thus in delyt' he lyueth and hath don ȝore 68
Biloued and drad þurgh fauour and fortune
Boþe of' his lordes and of' his comune 70

Ther with he was as to speke of' lynage 71
The gentileste born of' lumbardye
A fair persone. and strong' and ȝong' of' age
And ful of' honour and of' curtesie
Discret' ynough his contre for to gye 75
Sauynge in som þing' he was to blame
And wautier was þis ȝonge lordes name 77

I blame him thus that' he considered nought 78
In tyme comyng' what' mighte bityde
But' on his lust' present' was al his þought
As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde
wel neigh al oþir cures let' he slyde 82
And eek' he nolde þat' was [1] þe worst' of' al [1] þe was *erased*
wedde no wyf' for no þing' þat' might' bifal 84

Only þat' poynt' his poeple bar so sore 85
That' flokmel on a day to him þay went'
And oon of' hem that' wisest' was of' lore
Or elles þat' þe lord wolde best' assent
That' he schuld telle him what' his poeple ment' 89
Or ellis couþe he schewe wel such matiere
he to þe marquys sayd as ȝe schuln hiere 91

O noble marquys. ȝoure humanite 92
Assureth vs and ȝiueth vs hardynesse
As ofte as tyme is of' necessite
That we to ȝow may telle oure heuynesse
Acceptith lord now. of' ȝour necessite 96
That we with pitous hert' vnto ȝow playne
And let' ȝoure eeris my vois not' disdeyne 98

And haue I nought' to doon in þis matere 99
More þan anoþer man haþ in þis place /
ȝit for as moche as ȝe my lord so deere
han alway schewed me fauour and grace
I dar þe better ask' of' ȝow a space / 103
And audience to asken oure request/
And ȝe my lord to doon right' as ȝow lest' [leaf 118] 105

For certes lord so wel vs likith ȝow 106
And al ȝour werk' and euer han doon þat' we
Ne couþen not' deuysen how
we mighte lyue more in felicite
Saue oon þing' lord if' þat' ȝour wille be 110
That' for to be a weddid man ȝow list/
Than were ȝour peple in souereign hertes rest / 112

Bowith ȝour neck'. vndir þat' blisful ȝok' 113
Of' souereignete. nought' of' seruise
which þat' men clepe spousail or wedlok'
And thenkith lord among' ȝour þoughtes wise /

how þat' our dayes passe in sondry wyse 117
For þough we slepe or wake or rome aboute
Ay fleth þe tyme it' wil no man abyde. 119

And though ȝour grene ȝouþe floure as ȝit 120
In crepith age alway as stille as stoon
And deth manasith euery age and smyt'
In ech estat' for þer ascapith noon
And as certeyn as as we knowe euerychon 124
That' we schuln deye as vncerteyn we alle
Ben of' þat' day þat' deþ schal on vs falle 126

Acceptith thanne of' vs þe trewe entent 127
That neuer ȝit/ refusid ȝoure hest'
And we wil lord if' þat' ȝe wil assent
Chese ȝow a wyf' in schort' tyme atte lest
Born of' þe gentilest' and þe heighest' 131
Of' al þis lond so þat' it' oughte seme
honour to god. and ȝow as we can deme 133

Deliuer vs out' of' al þis busy drede 134
And tak' a wyf' fo hihe goddes sake /
For if' it' so bifel as god forbede
That' þurgh ȝour deþ ȝour lygnage schuld aslake
And þat' a straunge successour schuld take 138
ȝour heritage. O. wo were vs on lyue
wherfor we pray ȝow hastily to wyue 140

Her meeke prayer. and her pitous chere 141
Made þe marquys for to han pite
ȝe wolde quod he. myn owne poeple deere [*leaf* 118, *back*]
To þat' I neuer erst' þought' constreigne me.
I me reioysid of' my liberte 145
That' selden tyme is founde in mariage
Ther I was fre I mot' ben in seruage 147

But natheles I se of ȝou þe trewe entent 148
And trust vpon ȝour witt and haue doon ay
wherfor of my fre wil I wil assent/
To wedde me as soon as euer I may
But þer as ȝe haue profred me to day 152
To chese me a wyf I wol relese
That choys and pray ȝow of þat/ profre cesse / 154

For god it woot þat childer ofte been 155
vnlik her worthy eldris hem bifore
Bounte comeþ al of god nought of þe streen
Of which thay ben engendrid and I-bore
I trust in goddis bounte and *þer*fore 159
My mariage and myn estat and rest
I him bytake. he may doon as him lest 161

Let me aloon. in chesyng of my wif 162
That charge vpon my bak I wil endure
But I ȝow pray and charge vpon ȝour lyf
That wyf þat I take ȝe me assure /
To worschip / whil. þat hir lif may endure 166
In word and werk. boþe heer and euery where /
As sche an Emp*er*oures doughter were 168

And forthermor þus schul ȝe swer þat ȝe 169
Aȝeins my chois schuln neuer grucche ne stryue
For sins I schal forgo my liberte
At ȝour request as euer mot I priue
Ther as myn hert is set þer wil I wyue 173
And but ȝe wil assent in such manere
I pray spek no more of þis matiere 175

With hertly wil. þay sworen and assentyn 176
To al þis þing þer sayde no wight nay
Bysechyng him of grace er þat þay wentyn
That he wol graunten hem a certeyn day

Of' his spousail as soone as euer he may 180
For ȝit' alway þe peple som what' dredde [leaf 119]
lest' that' the marquys wolde no wyf' wedde 182

He graunted hem a day such as him lest' 183
On which he wolde be weddid sicurly
And sayd he dede al þis at' her requeste
And þay with humble hert' ful buxomly
knelyng' vpon her knees ful reuerently 187
him þanken alle and þus þay haue an ende
Of' her entent'. and hom aȝein þay wende 189

And her vpon he to his officeris 190
Comaundith for the feste to purueye
And to his priue knightes and squyeres
which charge ȝaf' as him list' on hem leye
And thay to his comaundement' obeye / 194
And ech of' hem doth his diligence
To doon vnto þe feste reuerence 196

¶ Explicit prima pars.

[*No more break in the MS.*]

NOught' fer fro þilke place honurable 197
wher as this marquys schop his mariage
Ther stood a throp*e* of' sighte delitable
In which þat pore folk' of' þat' vilage
hadden her bestes and her herburgage / 201
And after her labour took' her sustienaunce
After the erthe ȝaf' hem abundaunce 203

Among' this pore folk' there duelt' a man 204
which þat' was holden porest' of' hem alle
But' heighe god som tyme sende can
his grace vnto a litel oxe stalle
Ianicula men of' þat throop him calle / 208
A doughter had he fair y-nough to sight'
And Crisildes þis ȝonge doughter hight' 210

But for to speke of hir vertuous beaute 211
Than was sche oon þe fayrest vnder sonne
For porely I-fostered vp was sche
No licorous lust was in his body ronne
wel ofter of þe welle þan of þe tonne 215
She dronk and for sche wolde vertu please
Sche knew wel labour but noon ydel ease 217

But þough þis mayden tender were of age [*leaf* 119, *back*] 218
ȝet in þe brest of her virginite
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corrage
And in gret reuerence and charite
Hir olde pore fader fostred sche / 222
A fewe scheep spynnyng on þe feld sche kept
Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slept 224

And whan sche com hom sche wolde brynge 225
wortis or oþer herbis tymes ofte
The which sche schred and seth for hir lyuyng
And made hir bed ful hard and no þing softe
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte 229
with euery obeissance and diligence
That child may do to fadres reuerence 231

Vpon Grisildes þe pore creature 232
Ful ofte sithes þis marquys set his ye
As he on huntyng rood p*ar* auenture
And whan it fel he mighte hir espye
he not with wantoun lokyng of folye 236
his eyȝen cast vpon hir but in sad wyse
vpon hir cheer he wold him oft avise 238

Comendyng in his hert hir wo*m*manhede 239
And eek hir vertu passyng any oþer wight
Of so ȝong age as wel in cheer as dede
For þough þe poeple haue no gret insight

In vertu he considereth aright' 243
Hir bounte and desposed þat' he wolde
wedde hir oonly if' euer he wedde scholde 245

The day of' weddyng' cam but' no wight' can 246
Telle what' wo*m*man it schulde be /
For which meruayle wondrith many a man
And sayden whan þay were in priuete
wol nought' our lord ȝit' leue his vanite 250
wol he not' wedde allas allas þe while
why wol he þus himself' and vs bigyle 252

But' natheles þis marquys haþ doon make 253
Of' gemmes set' in gold and in asure
Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake /
And of' hir clothing' took' he þe mesure [leaf 120]
By a mayde y-lik' to hir of' stature 257
And eek' of' oþer ornamentes alle /
That' vnto such a weddyng' schulde falle / 259

The tyme of' vndern of' þe same day 260
Approchith þat' þis weddyng' schulde be /
And al þe palys put' was in array
Boþe halle an chambur. ylik' here degre
houses of' office stuffid with plente 264
Ther maystow se of' deynteuous vitayle
That' may be founde as fer as lastith Itaile / 266

This real marquys really arrayd 267
lordes and ladyes in his compaignye
he which vnto þe feste were prayed
And of' his retenu þe bachelerie
with many a soun of' sondry melodye 271
vnto þe vilage of' which I tolde
In þis array þe right' way han þay holde 273

Grysild of þis god wot ful Innocent / 274
That for hir schapen was al þis array /
To fecche water at a welle is went/
And cometh hom as soone as sche may
For wel sche had herd sayd þat ilke day 278
The marquys schulde wedde and if sche might
Sche wold haue seyen som what of þat sight 280

Sehe sayd I wol with oþer maydenes stonde / 281
That ben my felawes. in oure dore and see /
The marquys and *þer*fore wol I fonde /
To don at hom as soone as it may be
The labour which þat longeth vnto me 285
And þanne may I at leysir hir byholde
And sche þe way in to þe castel holde / 287

And as sche wold ouer þe preisshfold goon 288
The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle
And sche set doun her water-pot anoon
Bisides þe preischfold of þis oxe stalle /
And doun vpon hir/ knees. sche gan falle 292
And with sad countenaunce knelith stille
Til sche had herd what was þe lordes wille [*leaf* 120, *back*] 294

This þoughtful marquys spak vnto þis mayde 295
Ful soberly and sayd in þis manere
wher is ȝour fader Grisildes he sayde
And sche with reuerence and humble cheere
Sayde lord he is al redy heere / 299
And in sche goth wiþouten lenger let
And to þe marquys sche hir fader fet 301

He by þe hond þan takith þis olde man 302
And sayde þus. whan he him had on syde /
Ianicula I neither may ne can
lenger þe plesauns of myn herte hyde

If þat ȝe vouche sauf what so betyde / 306
Thy doughter wil I take er þat I wende
As for my wyf vnto hir lyues ende / 308

Thow louest me I wot it wel certeyn 309
And art my faithful liege man I-bore /
And al þat likith me I dar wel sayn
It likith þe. and specially þerfore
Tel me þat poynt. as ȝe haue herd bifore 313
If þat þow wolt vnto þat purpos drawe /
To take me as for þy · sone in lawe 315

The sodeyn caas þe man astoneyd þo 316
That reed he wax abaischt and al quakyng
he stood vnneþe sayd he wordes mo
But oonly þis. lord quod he my willyng
Is as ȝe wol aȝenst ȝoure likyng 320
I wol no þing ȝe be my lord so deere
Right as ȝow list gouernith þis matiere 322

Ȝit wol I quod þis markys softely 323
That in þy chambre I and þou and sche /
haue a collacioun and wostow why
For I wol aske if it hir wille be
To be my wyf and reule hir after me 327
And al þis schal ben doon in þy presence
I wol nought speke out of þyn audience 329

And in þe chamber whil þay were aboute 330
her tretys which as ȝe schul after hiere
The poeple cam vnto þe hous wiþoute [leaf 121]
And wondrid hem in how honest manere
And tendurly sche kept hir fader deere 334
But outerly grisildes wonder might
For neuer erst ne saugh sche such a sight 336

No wonder is þough þat' sche were astoned 337
To seen so gret' a gest' come in to þat' place /
Sche neuer was to suche gestes woned
For which sche loked with ful pale face /
But' schortly þis matiere forth to chace 341
These arn þe wordes þat' þe marquys sayde /
To this benigne verray faithful mayde 343

Grisyld he sayde ȝe schul wel vnderstonde / 344
It' liketh to ȝour fader and to me
That' I ȝow wedde and eek' it' may so stonde
As I suppose ȝe wil þat' it so be /
But' þese demaundes aske I first' quod he / 348
That' sith it' schal be doon in hasty wyse
wol ȝe assent' or elles ȝow auyse / 350

I say þis be ȝe redy with good hert/ 351
To al my lust' and þat I frely may
As me best' liste. do ȝow laughe or smert'
And neuer ȝe to gruch it' night' ne day
And eek' whan I say ȝe ȝe say not' nay 355
Neyther by word ne frownyng' contenaunce
Swer þis and here swer I oure alliaunce 357

Wondryng' vpon þis word quakyng' for drede 358
Sche sayde lord vndigne and vnworthy
I am to thilk' honour. þat' ȝe me bede
But' as ȝe wil ȝour self' right' so wol I
And here I swere þat' neuer wityngly 362
In werk' ne thought' I nyl ȝow disobeye
For to be deed þough me were loth to deye 364

This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he / 365
And forth goth he wiþ a ful sobre chere
Out' at' þe dore and after þat cam sche
And to þe pepul he sayd in þis manere

This is my wyf' quod he þat' stondith heere 369
honoureth hir and loueth hir I ȝow pray [*leaf* 121, *back*]
who so me loueth þer is no more to say 371

'And for þat' no þing' of' hir olde gere 372
Sche schulde brynge vnto his hous he bad
That' wo*m*men schuld despoilen hir right' þere
Of' which þese ladyes were nought' ful glad
To handle hir cloþes wher-in sche was clad 376
But' natheles þis mayde bright' of' hew
Fro foot' to heed þay schredde han al newe 378

Hir heeres han þay kempt' þat' lay vntressed 379
Ful rudely and with hir fyngres smale
A coroun on hir heed þay han I-dressed
And set' hir ful of' nowches gret' and smale
Of' hir array what' schuld I make a tale / 383
Vnnethe þe poeple hir knew for hir fairnesse /
whan sche translated was in such richesse / 385

This marquis haþ hir spoused with a ryng' 386
Brought' for þe same cause and þan hir sette
vpon an hors snow-whyt' and wel amblyng'
And to his palys er he lenger lette
with ioyful poeple þat' hir ladde and mette 390
Conueyed hire and þus þe day þay spende
In reuel til þe sonne gan descende 392

And schortly þis tale for to chace 393
I say þat' to þis newe marquisesse
God hath schewed fauour and sent' hir of' his grace
That' it' semyd not' by liklynesse
That' sche was born and fed in rudenesse 397
As in a cote or in an Oxe stalle
But' norischt' in an emp*er*oures halle 399

To euery wight' sche waxen is so deere 400
And worschipful þat' folk' þer sche was born
And from hir burthe knew hir ȝer by ȝere
Vnneth trowed þay but' dorst' han sworn
That' to Ianicle of' which I spak' biforn 404
Sche doughter were . for as by coniecture
Hem þought' sche was anoþer creature 406

For þough þat' euer vertuous was sche 407
Sche was encresed in such excellence [*leaf* 122]
Of' thewes goode i-set' in high bounte
And so discret and fair of' eloquence
So benigne and so digne of' reuerence 411
And couþe so þe poeples hert' embrace
That' ech hir loueþ þat' lokith in hir face 413

Noughtt' oonly of' Saluce in þe toun 414
Puplissched was þe bounte of' hir name
But' eek' byside in many a regioun
If' oon sayd wel anoþer sayd þe same
So sprad of' hire heigh bounte þe fame / 418
That' men and wo*m*men as wel ȝong' as olde
Gon to Saluce vpon hir to byholde 420

This walter louly . nay but' really 421
weddid with fortunat' honestete
In goddes pees lyueth ful esily
At' home and outward grace ynough haþ he
And for he saugh þat vnder low degre 425
was ofte vertu y-hid þe poeple him helde
A prudent' man and þat' is seint' ful selde 427

Noughtt' oonly þis Grisildes þurgh hit' witte 428
Couthe al þe feet' of' wifly humblesse /
But' eek' whan þat þe tyme required it'
The comun p*rof*yt' couthe sche redresse

Ther nas discord rancour ne heuynesse / 432
In al þat lond þat sche ne couþe appese /
And wisly bryng hem alle in rest and ese 434

Though þat hir housbond absent were anoon 435
If gentil men or oþer of hir contre
were wroth sche wolde brynge hem at oon
So wyse and rype wordes hadde sche
And Iuggement of so gret equite 439
That sche from heuen sent was as men wende /
Poeple to saue and euery wrong to amende 441

Nought longe tyme after þat þis Grisilde 442
was wedded sche a douȝter haþ I-bore
Al had hir leuer han had a knaue childe
Glad was þis marquis and þe folk *þer*fore
For though a mayden child come al byfore / [*U* 122, *bk*] 446
Sche may vnto a knaue child atteigne
By liklihed and sche nys not bareigne 448

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Incipit Tercia pars.

Ther fel as fallith many tymes mo 449
whan þat þis child haþ souked but a þrowe
This marquys in his herte longith so
Tempte his wyf. hir sadnesse for to knowe
That he ne might out of his herte þrowe 453
This meruaylous desir his wyf tassaye
Now god wot he þought hir to affraye 455

He had assayed hir ynough bifore 456
And fond hir euer good what needith it/
hire to tempte. and alway more and more
Though som men prayse it for a subtil wit
But as for me I say that euel it sit 460
Tassay a wyf whan þat it is no neede
And putte hir in anguysch and in dreede 462

For which þis marquis wrouȝt' in þis manere 463
he com aloone a night' þer as sche lay /
wiþ sterne face and with ful trouble cheere
And sayde þus Grisild quod he þat' day /
þat' I ȝow took' out' of' ȝour pore array / 467
And putte ȝow in estat' of' heigh̄ noblesse
ȝe haue not' þat'. forgeten as I gesse / 469

I say Grisild þis present' dignite 470
In which þat' I haue put' ȝow as I trowe
Makith ȝow not'. forȝetful for to be
þat' I ȝow took' in pore estat' ful lowe
For eny wele ȝe moot' ȝour selue knowe / 474
Tak' heed of' euery word þat/ I ȝow say /
Ther is no wight' þat' herith it' but' we tway / 476

ȝe wot' ȝour self'. how ȝe comen heere 477
In to þis hous it' is nought' long' ago
And þough to me þat' ȝe be leef' and deere
vnto my gentils ȝe be no þing' so
Thay seyn to hem it is gret schame and wo 481
For to ben subiect/. and ben in seruage /
To the þat' born art' of' a smal village [*leaf* 123] 483

And namely syn þy doughter was I-bore 484
These wordes han þay spoken douteles
But' I desire as I haue doon byfore
To lyue my lif' with hem in rest' and pees
I may not' in þis caas be reccheles 488
I moot' do with þy doughter for þe best/
Not' as I wolde but' as my pepul lest' 490

And ȝit' god wot þis is ful loth to me 491
But' naþeles wiþoute ȝoure witynge
wol I not' doon. but' þis wold I quod he /
That' ȝe to me assent' as in þis þing' /

Schew now ȝour paciens in ȝour wirching' 495
þat' þou me hightest' and swor in ȝon village
That' day þat' maked was oure mariage 497

Whan sche had herd al þis sche nouȝt' ameeuyd 498
Neyþer in word in cheer or countenaunce
For as it' semed sche was nought' agreeued
She sayde lord al lith in ȝour plesaunce
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce 502
Ben ȝoures al. and ȝe may saue or spille
ȝour oughne þing'. werkiþ after ȝour wille / 504

Ther may no þing' so god my soule saue 505
liken to ȝow þat' may displesen me
Ne I desire no þing' for to haue
Ne drede for to lese saue oonly ȝe
This wil is in myn hert' and ay schal be 509
No length of' tyme or deþ may þis deface /
Ne chaunge my corrage to oþer place / 511

Glad was this marquis of' hir answeryng' 512
But' ȝit' he feyned as he were not' so
Al dreery was his cheer and his lokyng'
whan þat' he schold out' of' þe Chambre go
Soon after þis a forlong' way or tuo 516
he priuely haþ told al his entent
vnto aman. and vnto his wyf' him sent' 518

A maner Sergeant' was þis priue man 519
The which þat' faithful oft' he founden hadde
In þinges grete. and eek' such folk wel can [*leaf* 123, *back*]
Don execucioun in þinges badde
The lord knew wel þat' he him loued and dradde 523
And whan þis sergeant' wist' his lordes wille
In to þe chamber he stalked him ful stille. 525

Ma dame he sayd ȝe most' forȝiue it' me 526
Though I do þing'. to which I am constreynit'.
ȝe ben so wys þat' ful wel knowe ȝe
Þat' lordes hestes mow not' ben I-feynit'
Thay mowe wel biwayl it' or compleyn it/ 530
But' men moot' neede vnto her lust' obeye
And so wol I þer is no more to seye 532

This child I am comaundid for to take / 533
And spak' no more. but' out þe child he hent'
Dispitously and gan a chiere make
As þough he wold han slayn it er he went'
Grisild moot' al suffer and al consent' 537
And as a lamb sche sitteth meeke and stille /
And let' þis cruel s*er*geant' doon his wille 539

Suspecious was þe defame of' þis man 540
Suspect' his face. suspect' his word also /
Suspect' þe tyme. in which he þis bigan
Allas hir doughter þat' she loued so
Sche wend he wold han slayen it right þo 544
But' naþeles sche ney*þer* weep ńe siked
Conformyng' hir to þat þe marquis liked 546

But' atte last' speke sche bigan 547
And mekely sche to þe sergeant' preyde
So as he was a worþy gentil man
That' she most' kisse hir child er þat' it' deyde
And on hir arm þis litel child sche leyde 551
wiþ ful sad face. and gan þe child to blesse
And lullyd it' and after gan it' kesse / 553

And þus sche sayd in hir benigne vois 554
Far wel my child I schal þe neuer see /
But' sith I þe haue marked wiþ þe croys /
Of' þilke fader blessed mot' þou be

That' for vs deyde vpon a cros of' tre 558
Thy soule litel child . I him bytake [*leaf* 124]
For þis nigħt' schaltow deyen for my sake / 560

I trowe þat' to a norice in þis caas 561
It' had ben hard þis rewthe for to see
wel might' a moder þan haue cryed allas
But' naþeles so sad stedefast' was sche
þat' she endured al aduersite 565
And to þe sergeant' mekely sche sayde /
Haue her agayn ȝour litel ȝonge mayde 567

Goth now quod sche and doþ my lordes heste 568
But' o þing' wil I pray ȝow of' ȝour grace
þat' but' my lord forbede ȝow atte leste
Burieth þis litel body in som place
That' bestes ne no briddes it' to-race / 572
But' he no word wil to þe purpos say /
But' took' þe child and went' vpon his way 574

This sergeant' com vnto þis lord agayn 575
And of' Grisildes wordes and hir cheere
He tolde poynt for poynt' in schort and playn
And him presentith with his douȝter deere
Som what' þis lord hath rewthe in his manere 579
But' naþeles his purpos huld he stille /
As lordes doon whan þay woln haue her wille 581

And bad þe *ser*gea*un*t' þat' he priuely 582
Scholde þis childe softe wynde and wrappe /
with alle circumstaunces tendurly
And cary it in a cofre or in his lappe
Vpon peyne his heed of' for to swappe 586
That' no man schulde knowe of' þis entent
Ne whens he com . ne whider þat' he went 588

But at Boloyne to his suster deere 589
That þilke tyme of panik was Countesse
He schuld it take and schewe hir þis matiere
Byseching her to doon hir busynesse
This child to fostre in alle gentilesse 593
And whos child þat it was he bad hir hyde
From euery wight for ought þat mighte bytyde 595

The sergeant goþ and haþ fulfild þis þing 596
But to þis marquys now retourne we [*leaf* 124, *back*]
For now goþ he ful fast ymaginyng
If by his wyues cher he mighte se
Or by hir word apparceyue þat sche 600
were chaunged. but he hir neuer couþe fynde
But euer in oon y-like sad and kynde / 602

As glad as humble as busy in seruise / 603
And eek in loue as sche was wont to be
was sche to him in euery maner wyse /
Ne of hir doughter nouȝt o word spak sche
Non accident/ for noon aduersite 607
was seyn in hir ne neuer hir doughter name
Ne nempnyd sche. in ernest ne in game 609

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Incipit. Quarta pars.

IN þis estaat þer passed ben foure ȝer 610
Er sche wiþ childe was. but as god wolde
A knaue child sche bar by þis waltier
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde
And whan þat folk it/ to his fader tolde 614
Nouȝt oonly he. but al his contre merye
was for þis child and god þay þank and herie 616

When it was tuo ȝer old and fro þe brest 617
Departed fro his noris vpon a day
This markys caughte ȝit another lest

To tempt' his wif' ȝit' after if' he may
O needles was sche tempted in assay 621
But' weddid men ne knowen no mesure
whan þat' þay fynde. a pacient' creature 623

Wyf' quod þis marquys ȝe han herd er þis 624
My peple sekly berith oure mariage
And namly syn. my sone y-boren is
Now is it' wors þan euer in al our age
The murmur sleþ my*n* hert and my corrage 628
For to myn eeris comeþ þe vois so smerte
þat' it' wel neigh destroyed haþ myn herte. 630

Now say þay þus whan wauter is a goon 631
Than schal þe blood of' Ianicula succede
And ben our lord for oþer haue we noon ·
Suche wordes saith my poeple out/ of' drede / [*leaf* 125]
wel ought' I of' such murmur taken heede 635
For certeynly I drede such sentence
þough þay not pleynly speke in myn audience / 637

I wolde lyue in pees if' þat' I might' 638
wher for I am disposid outrely
As I his suster seruede by night
Right' so þynk' I to serue him priuely
This warn I ȝou þat' ȝe not' sodeinly 642
Out' of' ȝour self' for no þing' schuld outraye
Beþ pacient and þer of' I ȝow pray 644

I haue quod sche sayd þus and euer schal 645
I wol no þing' ne nil no þing' certayn
But' as ȝow list'. nought' greueth me at al
Though þat' my doughter and my sone be slayn.
At' ȝour comaundeme*n*t' þis is to sayne 649
I haue no had no part of' children twayne
But' first' syknes and aft*er* wo and payne / 651

ȝe ben oure lord doth with ȝour owne þing' 652
Right' as ȝow list' axith no red of' me
For as I left' at hom al my cloþing'
whan I first' com to ȝow right' so quod sche
Left' I my wille and my liberte / 656
And took' ȝour cloþing'. wher for I ȝow preye
Doþ ȝoure plesaunce. I wil ȝoure lust' obeye 658

And certes if' I hadde prescience 659
ȝour wil to knowe. er ȝe ȝoure lust' me tolde
I wold it doon wiþoute negligence
But' now I wot' ȝour lust' and what' ȝe wolde
Al ȝour plesaunce ferm and stable I holde 663
For wist' I þat' my deth wold don ȝow ease
Right' gladly wold I deye ȝow to please 665

Deth may make no comparisoun 666
vnto ȝour loue and whan þis marquys say
The constance of' his wyf' he cast' a doun
His eyȝen tuo and wondrith þat' sche may
In pacience suffre al þis array 670
And forth he goþ with drery countenaunce
But to his hert' it' was ful gret' plesaunce [*leaf* 125, *back*] 672

This Igly sergeaunt in þe same wise 673
That' he hir doughter fette. right' so he
Or worse if' men worse can deuyse
hath hent hir sone þat ful was of' beaute
And euer in oon so pacient' was sche 677
That' sche no cheere made of' heuynesse
But' kist' hir sone. and after gan him blesse 679

Saue þis sche prayed him if' þat' he mighte 680
her litel sone he wold in eorþe graue
His tendre lymes delicate to sight
From foules and from bestes him to saue

But sche noon answer of him mighte haue 684
he wente his way as him no þinge ne roughte
But to Boloyne he tenderly it broughte 686

This marquis wondreth euer þe lenger þe more 687
vpon hir pacience. and if þate he
Ne hadde soþly knowen þer bifore
þate parfytly hir children loued sche
he wold haue wende þate of som subtilte 691
And malice or of cruel corrage
That sche had suffred þis wiþ sad visage 693

But wel he knew þate next himself certayn 694
Sche loued hir children beste in euery wise
But now of wo*m*men wold I aske fayn
If þese assayes mighten not suffice
what couþe a stourdy housebonde more deuyse 698
To prove hir wyfhode and her stedefastnesse /
And he contynuyng euer in stourdynesse 700

But þer ben folke of such condicio*u*n 701
That whan þay haue a certeyn purpos take
Thay can nought stynte of her entencio*u*n
But right as þay were bounden to a stake /
þay wil note of her firste purpos slake 705
Right so þis marquys fullich haþ purposed
To tempte his wyfe as he was first disposed 707

He wayteth if by word or countenaunce 708
That sche to him was chaunged of corage
But neuer couþe he fynde variaunce [*leaf* 126]
Sche was ay oon in hert and in visage
And ay þe ferþer þate sche was in age / 712
The more trewe if þate it were possible /
Sche was to him and more penyble. 714

For which it semyd þis þat of hem tuo 715
þer nas but oo wil for as walter lest/
The same plesa*u*nce was hir lust also
And god by thanked al fel for þe best/
Sche schewed wel. for no worldly vnrest 719
A wyf as of hir self no þing ne scholde
wylne in effect. but as hir housbond wolde 721

The sclaunder of walter ofte and wyde spradde 722
That of a cruel hert he wikkedly
For he a pore womman weddid hadde
hath morthrid boþe his children priuely
Such murmur was among hem comunly 726
No wonder is for to þe peples eere
Ther com no word. but þat þay mortherid were / 728

For which wher as his peple þer byfore 729
had loued him wel þe sclaunder of his diffame
Made hem þat þay him hatede þerfore
To ben a mordrer. is an hateful name
But naþeles for ernest or for game 733
he of his cruel p*ur*pos nolde stente
To tempt his wyf was set al his entente 735

Whan þat his doughter twelf ȝer was of age 736
he to þe court of Rome in suche wise
Enformed of his wille sent his message
Comaundyng hem. such bulles to deuyse
As to his cruel p*ur*pos may suffise 740
how þat þe pope as for his peples reste
Bad him to wedde anoþer if him leste 742

I say he bad þay schulde countrefete 743
The popes bulles makyng mencio*u*n
That he haþ leue his firste wyf to lete
As by þe popes dispensacio*u*n

To stynte rancour and discencioun 747
Bitwix his peple and him þus sayd þe bulle [*leaf* 126, *back*]
The which þay han publisshid atte fulle / 749

The rude poepel as it' no wonder is 750
wende ful wel þat' it had be right' so
But' whan þese tydynges come to Grisildis
I deeme þat' hir herte was ful wo
But' sche y-like sad for euermo 754
Disposid was þis humble creature
Thaduersite of' fortun al tendure 756

Abydyng' euer his lust' and his plesaunce 757
To whom þat' sche was ȝiue hert and al
As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce
But' schortly if' I þis story telle schal
This marquys writen haþ in special 761
A letter in which he schewith his entent
And secrely he to Boloyne it sent / 763

To therl of' panyk/ which þat' hadde þo 764
weddid his suster prayd he specially
To brynge hom aȝein his children tuo
In honurable estaat' al openly
But oon þing' he him prayde outerly 768
That' he to no wight' þough men wold enquere
Schuld not' tellen. whos children þay were 770

But' say þe mayde. schuld I-weddid be 771
vnto þe markys of' Saluce anoon
And as þis eorl was prayd so dede he
For at' day set'. he on his way is goon
Toward Saluce and lordes many oon 775
In riche array þis mayden for to guyde
hir ȝonge broþer rydyng' by hir syde 777

Arrayed was toward hir mariage 778
This freisshe may al ful of gemmes clere
hir broþer which þat. seuen ȝer was of age
Arrayed eek. ful freissh in his manere /
And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere 782
Toward Saluces schapyng her iournay
Fro day to day þay ryden in her way 784

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Incipit pars Quinta.

AMong al þis after his wikked vsage [*leaf* 127] 785
This marquis ȝit his wif to tempte more
To þe vttrest proef of hir corrage
Fully to han experiens and lore
If þat sche were as stedefast as byfore 789
He on a day in open audience
Ful boystously haþ sayd hir þis sentence 791

Certes Grisildes I had ynough plesaunce 792
To haue ȝow to my wif for ȝour goodnesse
And for ȝoure trouþe and for ȝour obeissaunce
Nought for ȝour lignage ne for ȝour richesse
But now know I in verray sothfastnesse / 796
That in gret lordschip if I wel auyse /
Ther is gret seruise in sondry wyse / 798

I may not do as euery plough man may 799
My poeple me constreignith for to take
Anoþer wyf and certeyn day by day
And eek þe popes rancour for to slake
Consentith it þat dar I vndertake 803
And trewely þus moche I wol ȝow say
My newe wif is comyng by þe way 805

Be strong of hert and voyde anoon hir place 806
And þilke dower þat ȝe broughten me
Tak it agayn I graunt it of my grace

Retourneth to ȝour fadres hous quod he
No man may alway haue p*ro*sperite 810
with euen hert' I rede ȝow endure
The strok' of' fortune or of' aduenture 812

And sche agayn answerd in pacience 813
My lord quod sche I wot' and wist/ alway
how þat' bitwixe ȝour magnificence
And my pouerte no wight' can ne may
Make comparis*oun* it' is no nay 817
¶ I. ne held me neuer digne in no manere
To ben ȝour wyf' ne ȝit' ȝour Chamberere 819

And in þis hous þer ȝe me lady made / 820
The highe god take I for my witnesse
And al so wisly he my soule glade
I neuer huld me lady ne maistresse / [*leaf* 127, *back*]
But' humble seruaunt' to ȝour worthinesse 824
And euer schal whil þat/ my lyf' may dure
Abouen euery worldly creature 826

That' ȝe so longe of' ȝour benignite 827
han holden me in honour and nobleye
wher as I was not' worthy for to be
That' þonk' I god and ȝow to whom I preye
Forȝeld it' ȝow þer is more to seye 831
vnto my fader gladly wil I wende
And with him duelle vnto my lyues ende / 833

Ther I was fostred as a child ful smal 834
Til I be deed my lyf' ther wil I lede
A widow clene in body hert and al
For sith I ȝaf' to ȝow my maydenhede
And am ȝour trewe wyf' it is no drede 838
God schilde such a lordes wyf' to take
Anoþer man to housbond or to make 840

And of ȝour newe wif. god of his grace 841
So graunte ȝow. wele and prosperite
For I wol gladly ȝelden hir my place
I which þat I was blisful wont to be
For sith it liketh ȝow my lord quod sche 845
That whilom were al myn hertes reste
That I schal gon. I wil go whan ȝow leste 847

But þer as ȝe profre me such dowayre / 848
As I first brought. it is wel in my mynde
It were my wrecchid clopes no þing faire
þe whiche to me were hard now for to fynde
O goode god. how gentil and how kynde 852
ȝe semed by ȝour speche and ȝour visage
That day þat maked was our mariage 854

But sop is sayd algate I fynd it trewe / 855
For in effect. it/ proued is on me
loue is nought old. as whan þat it is newe/
But certes lord for noon aduersite /
To deyen in þe caas it schal not be / 859
þat euer in word or werk I schal repente
That I ȝow ȝaf myn hert in hol entente [*leaf* 128] 861

My lord ȝe wot þat in my fadres place 862
ȝe dede me strippe out of my pore wede
And richely me cladden of ȝour grace
To ȝow brought I nought elles out of drede
But faith and mekenes and maydenhede / 866
And her agayn my clopyng I restore
And eek my weddyng ryng for euermore 868

The remenant of ȝour jewels redy be / 869
wiþin ȝour chambur dore dar I saufly sayn
Naked out of my fadres hous quod sche /
I com and naked moot I torne agayn

Al ȝour pleisaunS. wold I fulfille fayn 873
But' ȝit' I hope it be not ȝoure entent
That' I smocles out of' ȝour chambre went 875

Ȝe couþe not' doon so dishonest' a þing' 876
Þat' þilke wombe in which ȝour children leye
Schulde byforn þe poeple in my walkyng'
Be seye al bare wher-fore I ȝow pray
let me not' lik' a worm go by þe way / 880
Remembre ȝow myn oughne lord so deere /
I was ȝour wyf'. þough I vnworþy were 882

Wherfor in guerdoun of' my maydenhede 883
which þat' I brought' and nought' agayn I bere
As voucheth sauf'. as ȝeue me to my meede
Such a smok' as I was wont to were
That' I þer with may wrye þe wombe of' here / 887
Þat' was ȝour wif' and here take I my leue
Of' ȝow myn oughne lord. lest' I ȝow greue 889

The smok' quod he þat' þou hast' on þy bak' 890
let' it' be stille and ber it forþ wiþ þe
But' wel vnnethes þilke word he spak'
But' went' his way for routhe and for pite
Byforn þe folk' hir seluen strippith sche / 894
And in hir smok. wiþ heed and foot al bare
Toward hir fader house forth is sche fare 896

The folk' hir folwen wepyng' in hir weye 897
And fortune ay þay cursen as þay goon
But/ sche fro wepyng' kept' hir eyen dreye [leaf 128, back]
Ne in þis tyme word ne spak' sche noon
hir fader þat' þis tyding' herd anoon 901
Cursed þe day and tyme þat' nature
Schoop him to ben a lyues creature 903

For out of doute þis olde þore man 904
was euer in suspect of hir mariage
For euer he deemed sith þat it bigan
That whan þe lord fulfilled had his corrage
him wolde þinke þat it were disparage 908
To his estate. so lowe for to light
And voyden hire as sone as euer he might 910

Agayns his dought*er* hastily quod he 911
For he by noyse of folk knew hir comyng
And wiþ hir olde cote as it might be /
he couered hir ful sorwfully wepynge
But on hir body might he it nouȝt bringe 915
For rude was þe cloth. and sche mor of age
By deyes fele. þan hir mariage 917

Thus with hir fader for a certeyn space 918
Dwellith þis flour of wifly pacience
That neyther by her wordes ne by hir face
Byforn þe folk nor eek in her absence
Ne schewed sche that hir was doon offence 922
Ne of hir highe astaat no remembra*u*nce
Ne hadde sche. as by hir countena*u*nce 924

No wonder is for in hir gret estate 925
hir gost was euer in playn humilite
Ne tender mouth noon herte delicate
Ne pompe. ne semblant of realte
But ful of pacient benignite 929
Discrete and prideles ay honurable /
And to hir housbond euer meke · and stable 931

Men speke of Iob. and most for his humblesse /· 932
As clerkes whan hem lust can wel endite
Namely of men. but as in sothfastnesse
þoug̃h clerkes prayse wo*m*men but a lite

þer can no man in humblesse him acquyte 936
As wo*m*men can. ne can be half' so trewe [*leaf* 129]
As wo*m*men ben. but' it' be falle of' newe 938

[*No break in the MS.*]

Fro boloyne is þis erl of' panik y-come 939
Of which þe fame vp sprong' to more and lasse
And to þe poeples eeres alle and some
was couth eek' þat' a newe marquisesse
he wiþ him brought' in such pomp and richesse 943
That' neuer was þer seyn with mannes ye
So noble array in al west' lombardye 945

The marquys which þat' schoop and knew al þis 946
Er þat' þis erl was come sent' his message /
After þilk' cely pore Grisildis
And sche wiþ humble hert' and good visage
Not with so swollen hert' in hir corrage 950
Cam at' his hest'. and on hir knees hir sette
And reuerently and wyf'ly sche him grette 952

Grisild quod he. my wil is outrely 953
This mayden þat' schal weddid be to me
Receyued be to morwe as really
As it possible is in myn hous to be
And eek' þat' euery wight' in his degre 957
haue his estaat' in sittyng' and seruyse
In high plesaunce as I can deuyse 959

I haue no wo*m*man suffisant certeyne 960
The chambres for tarray in ordinance
After my lust' and þerfor wold I feyne /
That' þin were al such maner gouerna*u*nce
Thow knowest/ eek' of' al my plesaunce 964
Though þyn array be badde and ille byseye
Do þou þy deuer atte leste weye 966

Nought oonly lord þat I am glad quod sche / 967
To don ȝour lust. but I desire also /
ȝow for to serue and plese in my degre
wiþoute feynyng and schal euer mo
Ne neuer for no wele ne for no wo 971
Ne schal þe gost wiþinne myn herte stente /
To loue ȝow best wiþ al my trewe entent 973

And wiþ þat word sche gan þe hous to dight 974
And tables for to sette and beddes make [*leaf* 129, *back*]
And peyned hir to doon al þat sche might
Preying þe chamberers for goddes sake
To hasten hem and faste swepe and schake 978
And sche þe moste seruisable of alle /
haþ euery chamber arrayed and his halle / 980

Abouten vndern gan þis lord alight 981
þat with him brought þese noble children tweye
For which þe peple ran to se þat sight
Of her array so richely biseye
And þan at erst amonges hem þay seye 985
That walter was no forþ þough that him lest
To chaunge his wyf. for it was for þe best / 987

For sche is fairer. as þay demen alle / 988
Than is Grisild and more tender of age
And fairer fruyt bitwen hem schulde falle
And more plesaunt for hir high lynage
hir broþer eek. so fair was of visage 992
That hem to seen þe peple haþ caught plesaunce
Comending now þe marquys gouernaunce 994

O stormy poeple. vnsad and euer vntrewe 995
And vndiscret and chaungyng as a fane
Desyryng euer in rombel þat is newe
For lik þe moone ay wax ȝe and wane

Ay ful of' clappyng' dere ynough a Iane 999
ȝoure doom is fals ȝour constaunce yuel preuith
A ful gret' fool is he that' on ȝow leeuith 1001

Thus sayde saad folk in þat Citee 1002
whan þat' þe poeple gased vp and doun
For þay were glad right' of þe nouelte
To han a newe lady of' her toun
No more of' þis now make I menciou*n* 1006
But' to Grisildes agayn wol I me dresse
And telle hir constance and hir busynesse / 1008

Ful busy was grisild in euery þing' 1009
That' to þe feste was app*er*tinent
Right' nought' was sche abaissht' of' hir cloþing'
Though it were ruyde. and som del eek' torent
But' wiþ glad cheer to þe ȝate is sche went [*leaf* 130] 1013
with oþer folk' to griete þe marquisesse
And after þat' doth forth hir busynesse / 1015

With so glad chier his gestes sche receyueth 1016
And so connyngly euerich in his degre /
That' no defaute no man aparceyueth
But' ay þay wondren what' sche mighte be
That' in so pouer array was for to se 1020
And couþe such hono*ur* and reuerence
And worthily þay prayse hir prudence 1022

In al þis mene while sche ne stent 1023
This mayde and eek' hir brother to comende
with al hir hert'. in ful buxom entent
So wel þat' no man couþe hir pris amende
But' atte last' whan þat' þese lordes wende 1027
To sitte doun to mete he gan to calle /
Grisild as sche was busy in his halle 1029

Grisyld quod he as it were in his play 1030
how likith þe my wif' and hir beaute
Right' wel my lord quod sche for in good fay
A fairer saugh I neuer noon þan sche
I pray to god ȝiue hir prosperite 1034
And so hope I. þat' he wol to ȝow sende
Plesaunce ynough vnto ȝour lyues ende / 1036

On þing' warn I ȝow and biseke also / 1037
That' ȝe ne prike wiþ no tormentynge
þis tendre mayden as ȝe haue do mo
For sche is fostrid in hir norischinge
More tendrely and to my supposynge / 1041
Sche couþe not' aduersite endure
As couþe a pore fostrid creature 1043

And whan þis walter saugh hir pacience 1044
hir glade cheer and no malice at' al
And he so oft' had doon to hir offence
And sche ay sad. and constant as a wal
Continuyng' euer hir Innocence oueral 1048
This sturdy marquys gan his herte dresse
To Rewen vpon hir wyfly stedefastnesse / 1050

This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he [leaf 130, back] 1051
Be now no more agast' ne yuel apayed
I haue thy faith and þy benignite
As wel as euer womman was assayed
In gret' estate and propreliche arrayed 1055
Now knowe I dere wyf' þy stedefastnesse
And hir in armes took' and gan hir kesse 1057

And sche for wonder took' of' it' no keepe 1058
Sche herde not' what' þing' he to hir sayde
Sche ferd as sche had stert' out' of' a sleepe
Til sche out' of' hir masidnesse abrayde

Grisild quod he by god þat for vs deyde 1062
Thou art my wyf ne noon oþer I haue
Ne neuer had as god my soule saue 1064

This is my doughter which þou hast supposed 1065
To be my wif þat oþer faithfully
Schal be myn heir as I haue ay purposed
Thow bar hem in þy body trewely
At Boloyne haue I kept hem priuely 1069
Tak hem agayn for now maistow not seye
That þou hast lorn noon of þy children tweye 1071

And folk þat oþer weyes han seyd of me 1072
I warn hem wel þat I haue doon þis deede
For no malice ne for no cruelte
But for tassaye in þe þy wo*m*manhede
And not to slen my children god forbede 1076
But for to kepe hem priuely and stille
Til I þy purpos knowe and al þy wille 1078

Whan sche þis herd a swoned do*u*n sche fallith 1079
For pitous ioy. and after her swownyng
Sche bothe hir ȝonge children to hir callith
And in hir armes pitously wepyng
Embraseth hem and tenderly kissyng 1083
Ful lik a moder with hir salte teris
Sche bathis boþe hir visage and hir eeris 1085

O such a pitous þing it was to see[1]
hir swownyng and hir humble vois to heere
G*r*aunt mercy lord. god thank it ȝow quod sche [*leaf* 131]
That ȝe han kept my children so deere
Now rek I neuer to be deed right heere 1090
Sith I stond in ȝour loue and in ȝour grace
No fors of deth ne whan my spirit pace 1092

[1 This line is repeated in the MS., but has been scrateht out.]

O tender deere. ȝonge children myne 1093
ȝoure woful moder wende stedefastly
That' cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
had eten ȝow but' god of' his mercy
And ȝour benigne fader tenderly 1097
hath doon ȝow kept' and in þat' same stounde
Al sodeinly sche swapped doun to grounde / 1099

And in hir swough so sadly holdith sche 1100
hir children tuo. whan sche gan hem tembrace
That' with gret' sleight' and gret' difficulte
The children from her am þay gonne arace
O many a teer. o many a pitous face. 1104
Doun ran of' hem þat' stooden hir bisyde
Vnnethe aboute hir mighte þay abyde 1106

Waltier hir gladith and hir sorwe slakith 1107
Sche rysith vp abaisshed from hir traunce
And euery wight' hir ioy and feste makith
Til sche hath caught' agayn hir continaunce
wauter hir doth so faithfully plesaunce 1111
That' it was daynte for to see þe cheere
Bitwix hem tuo. now þay be met' in feere 1113

These ladys whan þat' þay her tyme say 1114
han taken hir and in to chambre goon
And strippen hir. out' of' hir rude array
And in a cloth of' gold þat' brighte schon
with a coroun of' many a riche stoon 1118
vpon hir heed þay in to halle hir brought
And þer sche was honoured as hir ought 1120

Thus hath þis pitous day a blisful ende 1121
For euery man and wo*mm*an doth his might
This day in mirth and revel to despende
Til on þe welken schon þe sterres bright

For more solempne in euery mannes sight' 1125
This feste was and gretter of' costage [*leaf* 131, *back*]
Than was þe reuel of' hir mariage / 1127

Ful many a ȝer in heigh prosp*er*ite 1128
lyuen þese tuo in concord and in rest'
And richeliche his doughter maried he
vnto a lord on of' þe worthiest'
Of' al ytaile and þanne in pees and rest' 1132
His wyues fader in his court' he kepith
Til þat' þe soule out' of' his body crepith 1134

His sone succedith in his heritage 1135
In rest' and pees. after his fader day
And fortunat'. was eek' in mariage
Al put' he not' his wyf' in gret' assay
This world is not' so strong' it is no nay 1139
As it' haþ ben in olde tymes ȝore
And herknith what' þis auctor saith þ*er*fore 1141

This story is sayd nat' for þat wyues scholde 1142
Folwe Grisild. as in humilite
For it were importable þough þay wolde
But' for þat' euery wight' in his degre
Schulde be constant. in aduersite 1146
As was Grisild. therfore Petrark' writeth
This story which wiþ high stile he enditeth 1148

For swich a wo*m*man was so pacient 1149
vnto a mortal man wel more vs oughte
Receyuen al in gre þat' god vs sent'
For gret' skil is he proue þat' he wrought
But' he ne temptith no man þat' he bought 1153
As saith seint' Iame if' he his pistil rede
he prouith folk' al day it is no drede 1155

And suffrith vs as for our exercise 1156
wiþ scharpe scourges of' aduersite
Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise
Nought' for to knowe oure wille for certes he
Er we were born. knew al our frelte 1160
And for oure best' is al his gouernaunce
Leet' vs þanne lyue in vertuous suffraunce 1162

But' oo word lordes herkneth er I go 1163
It' were ful hard to fynde now a dayes [leaf 122]
As Grisildes in al a toun þre or tuo
For if' þat' þay were put' to such assayes
The gold of' hem haþ now so badde alayes 1167
with bras þat' þough þe coyn be fair at' ye
hit' wolde raþer brest' in tuo þan plye 1169

For which heer for þe wyues loue of' bathe 1170
whos lyf' and alle of' hir secte god meyntene
In high maistry and elles were it' scathe
I wil with lusty herte freisch and grene
Say ȝow a song' to glade. ȝow I wene 1174
And lat' vs stynt' of' ernestful matiere
herknith my song'. þat' saith in þis manere / 1176

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Lenvoye. de Chaucer.

Grisild is deed and eek' hir pacience 1177
And bothe at' oones buried in Itayle
For whiche I crye in open audience / 1179
No weddid man so hardy be to assayle
his wyues pacience in hope to fynde
Grisildes for in certeyn he schal fayl 1182

O noble wyues ful of heigh prudence / 1183
let noon humilite ȝour tonges nayle
Ne lat no clerk haue cause or diligence 1185
To write of ȝow a story of such meruayle /
As of Grisildes pacience and kynde
Lest Chichiuache ȝow swolwe in hir entraile 1188

Folwith Ecco þat holdith no silence 1189
But euer answereth at þe countretayle
Beþ nouȝt bydaffed for ȝour Innocence 1191
But scharply tak on ȝow þe gouernayle
Empryntith wel þis lessoun in ȝour mynde
For comun profyt sith it may auayle 1194

Ȝe archewyues stondith at defens 1195
Syn ȝe ben strong as is a greet/ Chamayle
Ne suffre not þat men ȝow don offens 1197
And sclendre wydewes felle as in batayle
Beth egre as is a Tyger ȝond in Inde
Ay clappith as a mylle I ȝow counsaile 1200

Ne drede hem not. do hem no reuerence [leaf 132, back] 1201
For þough þin housbond armed be in mayle
The arwes of þy crabbid eloquence 1203
Schal perse his brest and eek his aduentayle /
In gelousy I rede eek þou him bynde
And þou schalt make him couche as doth a quayle 1206

If þou be fair þer folk ben in presence 1207
Schew þou þy visage and þin apparaile
If þou be foul be fre of þy despense 1209
To gete þe frendes do ay þy trauayle /
Be ay of chier as light as lef on lynde /
And let hem care and wepe and wryng and wayle 1212

Explicit.

¶ here bygynneth þe prolōge of' þe marchaundis tale.

WEpyng' and wailyng' care and oþer sorwe
I knowe ynough boþe on euen & on morwe
Quod þe marchaund. and so doon oþer mo
That weddid ben I trowe þat' it be so 1216
For wel I woot' it' fareth so with me
I haue a wyf'. þe worste þat' may be
For þough þe feend to hir y-coupled were
Sche wold him ouer macche I dar wel swere 1220
what' schuld I ȝow reherse in special
hir high malice. sche is a schrewe at' al
Ther is a long' and a large difference
Betwix Grisildes grete pacience 1224
And of' my wyf' þe passyng' cruelte
were I vnbounden also mot I the
I wolde neuer eft' come in þe snare
we weddid men lyue in sorwe and care 1228
Assay who-so wil and he schal fynde /
That' I say soth by seint Thomas of' Inde
As for þe more part'. I say not alle
God schilde þat' it scholde so byfalle / 1232
A good sir host'. I haue y-weddid be
Thise monthes tuo and more not par de
And ȝit' I trowe he þat' al his lyue
wyfles haþ ben þough þat men wold him riue 1236
vnto þe hert' ne couþe in no manere /
Tellen so moche sorwe as I now heere [leaf 133]
Couþe telle of' my wyfes cursednesse /
No quod our ost'! marchaunt' so god ȝow blesse 1240
Sin ȝe so moche knowen of' þat' art
Ful hertily tellith vs a part'
Gladly quod he of' myn oughne sore
For sory hert' I telle may na more 1244

[*No gap in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat'

Whilom þer was duellyng' in lombardy
A worþy knight' þat' born was of' pauy
In which he lyued in gret' prosperite
And fourty ȝer. a wifles man was he 1248
And folwed ay his bodily delyt'
On wo*m*men. ther was his appetyt'
As doon þese fooles þat/ ben seculere
And whan þat' he was passed fourty ȝere 1252
were it' for holyness or for dotage
I can not' say. but' such a gret' corrage
hadde þis knight'. to ben a weddid man
That' day and night'. he doþ al þat' he can 1256
Taspye wher þat' he mighte weddid be
Praying' our lord to graunte him þat' he
Might' oones knowen of' þat' blisful lif'
þat' is bitwix an housbond and his wyf' 1260
And for to lyue vnder þat' holy bond
with which god first'. man to wo*m*man bond
Noon oþer lif' said he is worth a bene
For wedlok' is so holy and so clene 1264
That' in þis world it is a paradis
Thus sayd þis olde knight' þat' was so wys
And certeinly as soth as god is king'
To take a wyf'. is a glorious þing/ 1268
And namely whan a man is old and hoor
Than is a wyf' þe fruyt' of' his tresor
Than schuld he take a ȝong' wif' and a fair
On which he might' engendre him an hair 1272

And lede his lyf' in mirthe and in solace
wher as þese bachileres synge allas
whan þay fynde eny aduersite
In loue which is but childes vanite [*leaf* 133, *back*] 1276
And trewely it sit wel to be so
That' bachilers haue ofte peyne and wo
On brutil ground þay bulde brutelnesse /
þay fynde whan þay wene sikernesse 1280
Thay lyue but as a brid oþer as a best'
In liberte and vnder noon arrest
Ther as a weddid man in his estate
lyuith his lif' busily and ordinate 1284
vnder þe ȝok' of' mariage I-bounde
wel may his herte in ioye and blisse abounde /
For who can be so buxom as a wyf' /
who is so trewe and eek' so ententyf' 1288
To kepe him seek and hool as is his make
For wele or woo sche wol him not' forsake /
Sche is not' wery him to loue and serue
Theigh þat' he lay bedred. til þat' he sterue 1292
And ȝet' som clerkes seyn it is not so
Of' whiche theofrast/ is oon of' þo
what' fors þough theofrast'. liste lye
Ne take no wif' quod he for housbondrye 1296
As for to spare in houshold þy dispense
A trewe seruaunt' doth more diligence
þy good to kepe þan þin oughne wif' /
For sche wol clayme half' part in al hir lif 1300
And if' þat' þou be seek so god me saue
þyne verray frendes or a trewe knaue
wol kepe þe bet' · þan sche þat' waytith ay
After þy good and hath doon many day 1304
And if' þat' þou take a wif' be war
Of' oon peril. which declare I ne dar.
This entent' and an hundrid siþe wors
writith þis Mas ther god his bones curs 1308

But take no keep of' al such vanite
Deffy theofrast' and herkne me
A wyf' is goddes ȝifte verrayly
Al oþer maner ȝiftes hardily 1312
As landes rentes pasture or comune
Or oþer moeblis ben ȝiftes of' fortune [*leaf* 134]
That' passen as a schadow on a wal
But' dred not/ if' I playnly telle schal 1316
A wyf' wil last and in þin hous endure
wel lenger þan þe lust/ p*ar* aduenture
Mariage is a ful gret' sacrament
he which haþ no wif' I hold him schent 1320
he lyueth helples. and is al desolate
I speke of' folk/ in seculer estate
And herken why I say not' þis for nought'
The wo*m*man is for mannes help I-wrought' 1324
The heighe god whan he had adam maked
And saugh him aloone body naked
God of' his grete goodnes sayde þanne
Let vs now make an helpe to þis manne 1328
lyk' to himself/. and þan he made Eue
her may ȝe see. and here may ȝe preue
That' wyf' is mannes help and his comfort'
his p*ar*adis terrestre and his desport' 1332
So buxom and so vertuous is sche /
Thay mosten neede lyue in vnite.
O fleisch þay ben. and on blood as I gesse
haue but' oon hert'. in wele and in distresse / 1336
∴ A wyf'! a seinte mary benedicite
how might' a man haue eny aduersite
That' haþ a wyf'. certes I can not say
The ioye þat' is betwixen hem tway 1340
Ther may no tonge telle ne herte þink
If' he be pore sche helpith him to swynk'
Sche kepith his good and wastith neuer a del
And al þat' her housbond list'. sche likith it wel 1344

Sche saith nought oones nay whan he saith ȝe
Do þis saith he. al redy sir saith sche
O blisful ordre o wedlok precious
Thou art so mery and ek so vertuous 1348
And so comendid and approued eek
That euery man þat holt him worth a leek
vpon his bare knees ought al his lyf
Thanken his god þat him haþ sent a wif [leaf 134, back] 1352
Or pray to god oon him for to sende
To be with him vnto his lyues ende /
For þan his lyf is set in sikernesse /
he may not be deceyued as I gesse / 1356
So þat he worche after his wyfes red
þan may be boldely bere vp his heed
Thay ben so trewe and also so wyse
For whiche if þou wolt do as þe wyse 1360
Do alway so þe womman wol þe rede
lo how þat Iacob as þe clerkes rede
By good counseil of his moder Rebecke
Band þe kydes skyn about his sones nekke 1364
For which his fader benesoun he wan
Lo Iudith as þe story telle can
By wys counseil sche goddes poepel kept
And slough him oliphernus whil he slept 1368
Lo abygaille by good counseil how sche /
Sauyd hir housbond Nacab whan þat he /
Schold han ben slayn And loke after also
By good counseil deliuered out of wo 1372
þe poeple of god. and made him mandoche
Of Assure enhaunsed for to be
Ther nys no þing / in gre superlatif
As saith Senec aboue an humble wyf 1376
Suffre þy wyues tonge as Catoun byt
She schal comaunde and þou schalt suffre it
And ȝit sche wil obeye of curtesye
A wif is keper of þin housbondrye 1380

wel may þe sike man wayle and wepe
Ther as þer is no wyf' þe hous to kepe
I warne þe if' wisly þou wilt' wirche
loue wel þy wyf' as crist' doth his chirche 1384
If' þou louest' þiself' þou louest' þy wyf' /
No man hatith his fleissch but in his lif /
he fostrith it' and *per*fore warne I þe
Cherissh þy wif'. or þou schalt' neuer the 1388
housbond & wif' what' men iape or pleye
Of' worldly folk' holden þe righte weye [*leaf* 135]
Thay ben so knyt' þer may noon harm bytyde
And nameliche vpon þe wyues syde 1392
For which þis Ianuary of' which I tolde
Considered hath Inwith his dayes olde /
The lusty lif' the v*er*tuous quiete
That' is in mariage hony-swete 1396
¶ And for his frendes on a day he sent
To tellen hem theffect' of' his entent
wiþ face sad. he haþ hem this tale told
he sayde frendes I am hoor and old 1400
And almost' god woot' at' my pittes brinke
vpon my soule som what' most' I þynke
I haue my body folily dispendid
Blessed be god that' I schal be amendid 1404
For I wil be certeyn a weddid man
And þat' anoon in al þe hast' I can
vnto som mayde fair and tender of' age /
I pray ȝow helpith for my mariage 1408
Al sodeynly. for I wil not' abyde
I wil fonde tespien on my syde
To whom I may be weddid hastily
But' for als moche as ȝe ben mo than I. 1412
ȝe schul rather such a þing' aspien
þan I and wher me lust' best' to allien
But' oo þing' warne I ȝow my frendes deere /
I wil noon old wyf' haue in no manere / 1416

Sche schal not' passe · sixtene ȝer certayn
Old fleisch and ȝong' fleisch þat' wold I haue ful fayn
Bet' is quod he a pyk' þan a pikereH
And bet' þan olde boef' is tendre vel 1420
I wil no wo*m*man twenty ȝer of' age
It' nys but' bene straw and gret' forage
And eek' þese olde wydewes god it woot'
Thay can so moche craft' of' wades boot 1424
So moche broken harm whan þat hem list'
That' wiþ hem schuld I neuer lyuen in rest'
For sondry scolis maken subtil clerkes
wo*m*man of' many a skile half' a clerk' is [*leaf* 135, *back*] 1428
But' certeyn a ȝong' þing' may men gye
Right' as men may warm wax with hondes plye
wher for I say ȝow plenerly in a clause
I wil noon old wyf' han right' for þat' cause 1432
For if' so were I hadde so meschaunce
þat' I in hir couþe haue no plesaunce
Than schuld I lede my lyf' in aduoutrie
And go streight' to þe deuel whan I dye. 1436
Ne children schuld I noon vpon hir geten
ȝet' were me leuer houndes had me eten
þan þat' myn heritage schulde falle
In straunge hond and þus I telle ȝow alle 1440
I doute not. I wot' þe cause why
Men scholde wedde. and forþermor woot I
Ther spekith many man of' mariage
That' wot' nomore of it þan wot' my page 1444
For whiche causes. man schuld take a wyf'
If' he ne may not' chast' be by his lif'
Take him a wif' with gret' deuocio*un*
By cause of' lawful procreacio*un* 1448
Of' children to þonour of' god aboue
And not' oonly for paramour and for loue.
And for þay schulde leccherye eschiewe
And ȝeld oure dettes whan þat it is due 1452

Or for þat ilk' man schulde helpen oþer
In meschief' as suster schal to þe broþer
And lyue in chastite ful heuenly
But' sires by ȝour leue þat am not I 1456
For by þanked I dar make auaunt
I fele my lemys stark' and suffisa*u*nt
To doon al þat' a man bilongeth vnto
I wot' my selue best' what' I may do 1460
¶ Though I be hoor I fare as doþ a tree *Nota*
That' blossemith er þat' þe fruyt' I-waxe be
A blossemy tre is neither drye ne deed
I fele me no-wher hoor but' on myn heed 1464
Myn herte and my lymes ben as greene.
As laurer þurgh þe ȝeer is for to seene *af* 136]
And synnes ȝe han herd al myn entent
I pray ȝow to my wille ȝe assent' 1468
Diu*er*se men diu*er*sly him tolde
Of' mariage many ensamples olde
Some blamed him some praised it' certayn
But' atte laste schortly for to sayn 1472
As alday fallith altercacio*u*n
Bitwixe frendes in despiteso*u*n
Ther fel a strif' bitwen his bretheren tuo *Nota*
Of' which þat' oon was clepid Placebo 1476
Iustin*us* soþly cleped was þat oþer
Placebo sayde .o. Ianuary broþer
Ful litel need had ȝe my lord so deere
Counseil to axe of' eny þat' is heere 1480
But' þat' ȝe ben so ful of' sapience
That' ȝow ne likith for ȝour heigh prudence /
To wayue fro þe word of' Salamon
This word said he vnto vs eu*er*ychoon 1484
werk/ al þing' by counsail þus sayd he /
And þanne schaltow nought' repente þe
But' þough þat' Salamon speke such a word
Myn owne deere broþer and my lord 1488

So wisly god bring' my soule at' ese and rest
I holde ȝour oughne counseil is þe best/
For broþer myn of' me tak' þis motif'
I haue now ben a court' man al my lyf' 1492
And god wot' þough̄. þat' I vnworþy be
I haue standen in ful gret degre
Abouten lordes in ful gret' estat
ȝit' had I neuer with noon of' hem debaat 1496
I neuer hem contraried trewely
I wot' wel þat' my lord can more þan I
what' þat' he saith I hold it ferm and stable
I say þe same or elles þing' semblable 1500
A ful gret' fool is eny counselour *nota*
þat' seruith any lord of' high honour
þat' dar presume or oones þenken it /
That' his counseil schuld passe his lordes wit' [*f* 136, *bk*] 1504
Nay lordes ben no fooles by my fay
ȝe haue ȝour self' y-spoken heer to day
So heigh̄ sentens so holly and so wel
þat' I consente and conferme euery del 1508
ȝour wordes alle. and ȝoure oppinioun
By god þer is no man in al þis toun
Ne in ytaile couþe better haue sayd
Crist' holdith him of' þis ful wel a-payd 1512
And trewely it' is an heigh corrage
Of' any man þat' stopen is in age /
To take a ȝong' wyf' by my fader kyn
ȝour herte hongith on a ioly pyn 1516
Doth now in þis matier right' as ȝow lest'
For fynally I hold it' for þe best'
Iustinus þat' ay stille sat' and herde /
Right' in þis wise he to placebo answerde / 1520
Now brother myn be pacient' I ȝow pray
Syns ȝe haue sayd. and herknith what' I say
Senec' amonges oþer wordes wyse
Saith þat' a man aught' him wel auyse 1524

To whom he ȝiueth his lond or his catel
And syns I aught' auyse me right' wel
To whom I ȝiue my good away fro me
wel more I aught' avised for to be 1528
To whom I ȝiue my body for alwey
I warn ȝow wel. it' is no childes pley
To take a wyf' wiþoute avisement'
Men most' enquere þis is myn assent 1532
wher sche be wys or sobre or dronkelewe
Or proud or oþer way a schrewe
A chyder or a wastour of' þy good
Or riche or pore or elles man is wood 1536
Al be it so þat no man fynde schal
Noon in þis world þat' trottith hool in al
Neyther man ne best' such as man can deuyse
But' natheles it aught' ynough suffise 1540
wiþ any wyf' if' so were þat' sche hadde
Mo goode thewes þan hir vices badde [*leaf* 137]
And al þis askith leyser to enquere
For god woot' I. haue weped many a tere 1544
Ful priuely syns I haue had a wyf'
Prayse who so wil a weddid mannes lif'
Certes I fynd in it but' cost' and care
And obseruaunce of' alle blisses bare 1548
And ȝit god woot' myn neighebours aboute
And namely of' wo*mm*en many a route
Sayn þat' I haue þe moste stedefast wyf' /
And eek' þe meekest' oon þat' berith lyf' 1552
But' I woot' best' wher wryngith me my scho *nota*
ȝe may for me right' as ȝow liste do
Auysith ȝow ȝe ben a man of' age
how þat' ȝe entren in to mariage 1556
And namly with a ȝong' wif' and a fair
By him þat made water eorþe and air
The ȝongest' man þat' is in al þis route
Is busy ynough to bring' it wel aboute 1560

To haue his wif' alloone trustith me
ȝe schul not' please hir fully ȝeres þre
This is to say to doon hir ful plesaunce
A wyf' axith ful many an obseruaunce 1564
I pray ȝow þat' ȝe be not' euel apayd
wel quod þis Ianuary and hastow sayd
Straw for þy senec' and for þy *prouerbis*
I coueyte nought' a panyer ful of' herbes 1568
Of' scole termes wiser men þan þow /
As I haue sayd assenten her right' now
Vnto my purpose . placebo what' say ȝe
I say it is a cursed man quod he / 1572
That' lettith matrimoigne sicurly
And with þat word þay rysen vp sodeinly
And ben assented fully þat' he scholde
Be weddid whan him lust'. and wher he wolde 1576
The fantasy . and þe curious busynesse
Fro day to day . gan in þe soule impresse
Of' Ianuary aboute his mariage
Many a fair schap and many a fair visage [*leaf* 137, *back*] 1580
Ther passith þorugh his herte night' by night
As who so took' a mirrour polissched bright'
And set' it' in a comun market place
Than schuld he se . many a figure pace 1584
By his mirour and in þe same wise
Gan Ianuary in his þought' deuyse
Of' maydens which þat' duellid him bisyde
he wist' not' where þat' he might' abyde 1588
For þough þat' oon haue a beaute in hir face
Anoþer stant' so in þe poeples *grace*
For hir sadnesse and hir benignite
That' of' þe poeple grettest' vois had sche 1592
And som were riche and hadde badde name
But' naþeles bitwix ernest' and game
he atte last/ appoynted him anoon
And let' al oþer fro his herte goon 1596

And ches hir of' his oughne auctorite
For loue is blynd al day and may not se/.
And whan he was in to bedde brought
He purtrayed in his hert' and in his þought 1600
Hir freische beaute and hir age tendre
Hir myddel smal hir armes long' and sclendre
Hir wise gouernaunce hir gentilesse /
Hir wommanly beryng' and hir sadnesse 1604
And whan þat he on hir was condescendid
him þought his chois mighte nought' ben amendid
For whan þat' he himself' concludid hadde
Him þough ech oþer mannes wyf' so badde 1608
That' impossible it were to repplie
Agayn his choys þis was his fantasie
his frendes sent he to at' his instaunce
And prayed hem to doon him þat plesaunce 1612
That' hastily þay wolde to him come
he wold abrigge her labour alle and some
Nedith no more for him to gon ne ryde
he was appoynted þer he wold abyde / 1616
Placebo cam and eek' his frendes soone /
And althirfirst'. he bad hem alle a boone [leaf 138]
That' noon of' hem noon argumentis make /
Agayn þe purpos. which þat' he had take 1620
which purpos was plesaunt to god sayd he /
And verray ground of' his prosperite
He sayd þer was a mayden in þe toun
which þat' of' beaute hadde gret' renoun 1624
Al were it so sche were of' smal degre /
Suffisith him hir trouth and hir beaute /
which mayde he sayd he wold haue to his wyf'
To lede in ease and holinesse his lyf' 1628
And þanked god þat' he might' haue hir al
That' no wight' his blisse parten schal
And preyed hem to laboure in þis neede
And schapen þat' he faile not' to speede 1632

For þan he sayd his spirit' was at' ease
Than is quod he no þing' may me displease /
Saue oon þing' prikkith in my conscience /
The which I wil reherse in ȝour presence 1636
I haue herd sayd quod he ful ȝore ago
Ther may no man haue parfyt' blisses tuo
This is to say in erthe and eek' in heuene
For þough he kepe him fro þe synnes seuene / 1640
And eek' from ylk' a braunche of' þilke tre
ȝit' is þer so parfy felicite
And so gret' ease and lust' in mariage
That' euer I am agast' now in myn age 1644
That' I schal lede now so mery a lyf'
So delicat' wiþoute wo and stryf'
That' I schal haue myn heuen in erthe heere
For sith þat' verrey heuen is bought' so deere 1648
with tribulaciou*n* and gret penau*n*ce
how schuld I þanne þat liue in such plesa*u*nce
As alle wedded men doon with her wyues
Come to blisse ther crist' eterne on lyue is 1652
This is my drede and ȝe my breþeren tweye
Assoilith me þis questio*u*n I ȝow preye
Iustinus which þat' hated his folye
Answerd anoon right' in his iaperie [*leaf* 138, *back*] 1656
And for he wold his longe tale abrigge
he wolde noon auctorite alegge
But' sayde sir. so ther be noon obstacle
Oþer þan þis god of' his high miracle 1660
And of' his mercy may so for ȝow wirche
That' er ȝe haue ȝour rightes of' holy chirche
ȝe may repente of' weddid ma*n*nes lyf'
In which ȝe sayn þer is no wo ne stryf' 1664
And elles god forbede but he sente
A weddid man grace him to repente
wel ofte rather þan a sengle man
And þerfor sire þe beste reed I can 1668

Dispaire ȝow nought' but' haue in ȝoure memorie
P*ar*aduenture she may be ȝour purgatorie
Sche may be goddes mene and goddes whippe *nota*
Than schal ȝour soule vp to heuen skippe 1672
Swyfter þan doþ an arwe out of' a bowe
I hope to god her after ȝe shuln knowe
That' þer nys noon so gret' felicite
In mariage ne neuermor schal be 1676
þat' ȝou schal lette of' ȝour sauaciou*n*
So þat' ȝe use as skile is and resoun
The lustes of' ȝour wyf' attemperely
And þat' ȝe please hir not to amorously 1680
And þat' ȝe kepe ȝow eek' from oþer synne
My tale is doon. for my witt' is þynne
Beþ not' agast' her of' my broþer deere /
But' let' vs waden out of' þis matiere 1684
The wif' of' Bathe if' ȝe han vnderstonde
Of' mariage which ȝe han now on honde
Declared hath ful wel in litel space
Fareth now wel god haue ȝow in his grace 1688
And with þat' word þis Iustinus and his broþer
Han tak' her leue and ech of' hem of' oþer
And whan þay saugh þat' i most needis be
Thay wroughten so by sleight' and wys trete 1692
That' sche þis mayden which þat/ Mayus hight'
As hastily as euer sche might [*leaf* 139]
Schal weddid be vnto þis Ianuarie
I trow it were to longe ȝow to tarie 1696
If' I ȝow tolde of' euery scrit and bond
By which þat sche was feoffed in his lond
Or for to herken of' hir riche array
But' finally y-comen is þat' day 1700
That' to þe chirche boþe ben þay went
For to receyue þe holy sacrement'
Forth comth þe preost with stoole about his necke
And bad hir be lik' Sarra and Rebecke 1704

In wisdom and in trouth of' mariage
And sayd his orisoun̄s as is vsage /
And crouched hem and bad god schuld hem blesse /
And made al secur ynowgh with holinesse 1708
Thus ben þay weddid wiþ Solempnite
And atte fest' sittith he and sche
with othir worþy folk' vpon the deys
Al ful of' ioy and blis is that' paleys 1712
And of' Instrumentz and of' vitaile
The moste deinteuous of' ytaile
Biforn hem stood such Instrumen̄ts of' soun
That' Orpheus ne of' Thebes Amphioun̄ 1716
Ne maden neuer such a melodye
At' euery cours ther cam loud menstralcye
That' neuer tromped Ioab for to heere
Ne he Theodomas ȝit' half' so cleere / 1720
And Thebes whan the cite was in doute
Bachus þe wyn hem schenchith al aboute
And venus laughith vpon euery wigh̄t
For Ianuary was bycome hir knigh̄t/ 1724
And wolde bothe assayen his corrage /
In liberte and eek/ in mariage
And with hir fuyrbrond in hir hond aboute
Daunceth bifore þe bryde and al þe route 1728
And certeynly I dar right' wel say þis
Imeneus þat' god of' weddyng' is
Seigh̄ neuer his lif' so mery a weddid man
holde þy pees thow poete marcian [leaf 139, back] 1732
That' writest' vs. þat' ilke weddyng' merye
Of' hir philologie and he mercurie
And of' þe songes that' the muses songe
To smal is boþe þy penne and eek' þy tonge 1736
For to descriue of' þis mariage
whan tender ȝouthe haþ weddid stoupyng' age
Ther is such mirthe. þat' it may not' be write
Assaieth it ȝour self' þan may ȝe wyte 1740

If þat I lye or noon in þis mateere
Mayus þat sit with so benigne a cheere /
Hir to bihold it / semed fayerye /
Queen ester loked neuer with such an ye 1744
On assure so meke a look haþ sche
I may not ȝow deuyse al hir beaute
But thus moche of hir beaute telle I may
That sche was lyk þe brighte morw of may 1748
Fulfild of alle beaute and plesaunce
This Ianuary is rauyscht in a traunce
At euery tyme he lokith on hir face
But in his hert he gan hir to manace 1752
That he þat nigh̃t in armes wold hir streyne
Harder þan euer paris did Eleyne
But natheles ȝit had he gret pite
That þilke night offenden hir most he / 1756
And þought allas .o. tendre creature
Now wolde god ȝe mighte wel endure
Al my corrage . it is so scharp and keene
I am agast ȝe schul it not susteene 1760
For god forbede þat I dede al my migh̃t
Now wolde god þat it were woxe nigh̃t
And þat þe night wold stonden euermo
I wold þat al þis poeple were a go 1764
And fynally he doth al his labour
As he best mighte sauyng his honour
To hast hem from þe mete in subtil wise
The tyme cam þat resoun was to ryse 1768
And after þat men daunce and drynke fast
And spices about þe hous ꝑay cast [leaf 140]
And ful of ioy . and blis is euery man
Al but a squier that high̃t Damyan 1772
which karf tofor þe knight ful many a day
he was so rauyssht on his lady may
That for þe verray peyne he was nigh wood
Almost he swelt and swowned as he stood 1776

So sore haþ venus hurt' him wiþ hir brond
As þat' sche bar it daunsyng' in hir hond
And to his bed he went' him hastily
No more of' him as at' þis tyme telle I 1780
But' þer I lete him now his wo compleyne
Til freisshe may wol rewen on his peyne /
O perilous fuyr þat' in þe bed-straw bredith Auctor
O famuler fo þat' his seruice bedith 1784
O seruaunt' traitour false homly hewe
lyk' to þe nedder in bosom vntrewe /
God schild vs alle from ȝour acqueintance /
O Ianuary dronken in plesaunce 1788
Of' mariage se how þy damyan
Thyn oughne squier and þy borne man
Entendith for to do þe vilonye /
God graunte þe þin homly fo espye 1792
For in þis world nys worse pestilence /
Than homly foo. alday in þy presence
Parfourmed haþ þe sonne his ark' diourne
No lenger may þe body of' him soiourne 1796
On thorisonte. as in latitude
Night' with his mantel þat' is derk' and rude
Gan ouersprede themesperie aboute
For which departed is þe route 1800
Fro Ianuary with þank' on euery side /
hoom to her hous lustily þay ryde
wher as þay doon her þinges as hem leste
And whan þay seigh her tyme þay goon to reste / 1804
Soone after þat'. þis hasty Ianuarie
wold go to bed. he wold no lenger tarie
he drinkith ypocras clarre and vernage /
Of' spices hote to encre his corrage [leaf 140, back] 1808
And many a letuary had he ful fyn
Such as þe cursed monk' daun Constantin
Hath writen in his book' de coitu
To ete hem alle he nas no þing' eschieu 1812

And to his priuẽ frendes þus sayd he
For goddes loue as soon as it may be
let' voyden al þis hous in curteys wise
And þay han doon right' as he wold deuyse 1816
Men drinken and þe trauers drawe anoon
The bruyd was brought' abedde as stille as stoon
And whan þe bed was with þe prest' I-blessid
Out' of' þe chambre haþ euery wight' him dressed 1820
And Ianuary haþ fast/ in armes take/
His freisshe may / his paradys his make
He lullith hir he kissith hir ful ofte
with þikke bristlis on his berd vnsofte 1824
lik' to þe skyn of' houndfisch scharp as brere
For he was schaue al newe in his manere
He rubbith hir about' hir tendre face
And sayde þus allas I mot' trespace 1828
To ȝow my spouse. and ȝow gretly offende /
Er tyme come þat' I wol doun descende
But' naþeles considerith þis quod he
Ther nys no werkman what' so euer he be 1832
þat' may boþe werke wel and hastily
This wol be doon at' leysir parfitly
It' is no fors how longe þat we pleye
In trewe wedlock' coupled be we tweye 1836
And blessed be þe ȝok' þat' we ben Inn
For in actes we mow do no synne
A man may do no synne with his wif'
Ne hurt' himseluen wiþ his oughne knyf' 1840
For we han leue to play vs by þe lawe
Thus laborith he til þat' þe day gan dawe
And' þan he takith a sop in fyn clarre
And vpright' in his bed þan sittith he 1844
And after þat' he song' ful lowd and clere
And kissed his wyf' and made wantoun cheere [leaf 141]
he was al coltissch ful of' ragerye
And ful of' iargoun as a flekked pye 1848

The slakke skyn about' his nekke slakeþ
whil þat' he song'. so chaunteþ he and craketh
But' god wot' what' þat' may þought' in hir hert /
whan sche him saugh vp sittyng' in his schert' 1852
In his night' cappe and with his nekke lene
Sche praysith nought' his pleying' worth a bene
Than sayd he þus my reste wol I take
Now day is come I may no lenger wake 1856
And doun he layd his heed and sleep til prime
And afterward whan þat' he saugh his tyme
Vp riseth Ianuary but' freissche may
Holdith hir chamber vnto þe fourþe day 1860
As vsage is of' wyues for þe best'
For euery labour som tyme moot' haue rest'
Or elles longe may he not' endure
This is to say. no lyues creature 1864
Be it'. fissch or brid. or best' or man
Now wol I speke of' woful damyan
That' languyssh for loue as ȝe schuln here
Therfore I speke to him in þis manere 1868
¶ I say. O sely damyan allas Auctor
Answere to my demaunde as in þis caas
how schaltow to þy lady freissche may
Telle þy woo. sche wol alway say nay 1872
Eek' if' þou speke sche wol þy woo bywreye
God be þin help I can no better seye
This seke damyan in venus fuyr
So brennith þat' he deyeth for desir 1876
For which he put' his lyf' in aduenture
No lenger might' he in þis wo endure
But' priuely a penner gan he borwe
And in a letter wrot' he al his sorwe 1880
In maner of' a compleynt' or of' a lay
vnto his faire freissche lady may
And in a purs of' silk' heng' on his schert
he haþ it' put' and layd it at his hert' [leaf 141, back] 1884

¶ The moone þat' anoon was þilke day
That' Ianuary had weddid freische may
In tuo of' taure was in to Cancre gliden
So long' hath mayus in hir chambre abiden 1888
As custom is vnto þese nobles alle
A bryde schal not' eten in þe halle
Til dayes foure. or þre dayes atte lest'
I-passed ben. þan let' hir go to þe fest' 1892
The fourthe day complet fro noon to noon
whan þat' þe heighe masse was I-doon
In halle sitte. þis Ianuary and may.
As freissch as is þe brighte someres day 1896
And so bifelle þat' þis goode man
Remembrid him vpon þis Damyan
And sayde seinte mary how may þis be
That' Damyan entendith not' to me 1900
Is he ay seek' or how may þis bityde
his squiers which þat' stoode þer bisyde.
Excusid him by cause of' his syknesse
which letted him to doon his busynesse 1904
Noon oþer cause mighte make him tarie
That' me forthinkith quod þis Ianuarie
he is a gentil squyer by my trouþe
If' þat' he deyde it' were harm and routhe 1908
he is as wys discret' and eek' secre
As any man I wot' of' his degre
And þerto manerly and seruysable
And for to be a thrifty man right' able 1912
But' after mete as soon as euer I may
I wol myself' visit him and eek' may
To doom him al þe comfort' þat' I can
And for þat' word him blessed euery man 1916
That' of' his bounte and his gentilesse
he wolde so comfort' in seekenesse
his squyer. for it' was a gentil deede
Dame quod þis Ianuary tak' good heede 1920

At' after-mete ȝe wiþ ȝour wo*m*men alle /
whan ȝe han ben in chambre out' of' þis halle [*leaf* 142]
That' alle ȝe goo to se þis Damyan
Doth him desport'. he is a gentil man 1924
And tellith him þat' I wil him visite
Haue I no þing'. but' rested me a lyte /
And spedith ȝow faste for I wol abyde
Til þat' ȝe slepe faste by my syde 1928
And with þat' word. he gan vnto him calle
A squier þat' was marchal of' his halle
And told him certeyn þinges what' he wolde
This freissche may hath streight' hir wey I-holde 1932
wiþ alle hir wo*m*men vnto Damyan
Doun by þe beddes syde sat' sche þan
Comfortyng' him as goodly as sche may
This damyan whan þat' his tyme he say 1936
In secre wise his purs and eek' his bille /
In which þat' he. I-writen had his wille
Haþ put' in to hir hond wiþouten more
Saue þat' he siketh wonder deepe and sore 1940
And softely to hir right þus sayd he /
Mercy and þat' ȝe not' discouer me
For I am deed if' þat' þis þing' discouered be
þis purs in hir bosom hud had sche 1944
And went' hir way ȝe gete no more of' me
But vnto Ianuary comen is sche
þat' on his beddes syde sit' ful softe /
And takith hir and kissith hir ful ofte / 1948
And layd him doun to slepe and þat' anoon
Sche feyned hir as þat sche moste goon
Ther as ȝe woot' þat' euery wight' moot/ neede
And whan sche of' þis bille haþ taken heede / 1952
Sche rent' i al to cloutes atte laste
And in to þe priuy softely it cast/
who studieth now but faire freissche may
A-doun by olde Ianuary sche lay 1956

That slepith til þat. þe coughe haþ him awaked
Anoon he prayde stripen hir al naked
he wold of hir he sayd haue som plesaunce
hir clothis dede him he sayde som grevaunce [U 142, bk] 1960
And sche obeieth be hir lief or loth
But lest that precious folk be with me wroth
how þat he wrought̃e. I dar not telle
Or whe þir it semed him paradys or helle 1964
But here I lete hem werken in her wise
Til euensong rong and þan þay most arise
whe þir it be by desteny or aduenture
were it by influence or by nature 1968
Or by constellacioun þat in such estate
The heuen stood þat tyme fortunate
As for to putte a bulle of venus werkis
For alle þing hath tyme as seyn þese clerkis 1972
To eny womman for to gete hir loue
I can not say but grete god aboue /
þat knowith þat noon acte is causeles
He deme of al. for I wil holde my pees 1976
But soth is þis how þat þis freisshe may
hath take such impressioun þat day
Of pite of þis sike damyan
That from hir herte sche ne dryue can 1980
The remembraunce for to doon him ease /
Certeyn þought̃ sche. whom þat þis þing displease
I rekke not for her I him assure
To loue him best of eny creature / 1984
Though he no more hadde þan his scherte
Lo pite renneth soone in gentil herte
heer may ȝe see how excellent fraunchise
In womman is. whan þay narow hem auyse 1988
Som tyraunt is as þer ben many oon
That haþ an hert as hard as is a stoon
which wold han lete steruen in þe place
wel rather þan han graunted him her grace 1992

And hem reioysen in her cruel pride
And rekken nouȝt to ben an homicide
¶ This gentil may fulfillid of pite
Right of hir hond a letter maked sche / 1996
In which sche *gra*untith him hir verray grace
Ther lakkid nought but oonly day and place [*leaf* 143]
wher þat sche might vnto his lust suffise
For it schal be right as he wol deuyse 2000
And whan sche saugh hir tyme vpon a day
To visite þis damyan goþ May
And subtilly þis lettre doun sche thruste
Vnder his pylow. rede it if him luste 2004
Sche takith him by þe hond and hard him twiste
So secrely þat no wight of hit wiste
And bad him be al hool and forþ sche wente
To Ianuary whan þat he for hir sente 2008
vp ryseth Damyan þe nexte morwe
Al passed was his siknes and his sorwe /
He kembith him. he pruneth him and pyketh
he doth al þat vnto his lady likith 2012
And eek to Ianuary he goth as lowe /
As euer did a dogge for þe bowe /
He is so plesaunt vnto euery man
For craft is al. who so þat do it can 2016
That euery wight is fayn to speke him good
And fully in his lady grace he stood
Thus lete I damyan about his neede
And in my tale forth I wol procede 2020
Some clerkes holden þat felicite
Stant in delit and þerfor certeyn he
This noble Ianuary with al his might
In honest wise as longith to a knight 2024
Schop him to lyue ful deliciously
his housyng his array as honestly
To his degre was maked as a kynges
Amonges oþer of his honest þinges 2028

he made a gardyn walled al wiþ stoon
So fair a Gardyn wot' I no wher noon
For out' of' doute I verrely suppose
That' he þat' wroot' þe romauns of' þe Rose 2032
Ne couþe of' hit' þe beaute wel deuyse
Ne Pirapus ne might' not' wel suffise
Though he be god of' gardyns for to telle /
The beaute of' þe gardyn and þe welle [*leaf* 143, *back*] 2036
That' stood vnder a laurer alway greene
Ful ofte tyme he pluto and his queene
Preserpina and al þe fayerie
Desporten hem and maken melodye 2040
Aboute þat' welle and daunced as men tolde
This noble knight' þis Ianuary þe olde
Such deynte haþ in it' to walk' and pleye
That' he wold no wight' suffre bere þe keye 2044
Saue he himself' for of' þe smale wyket'
he bar alway of' siluer a smal cliket'
wiþ which whan þat' him list' he it vnschette
And whan he wolde pay his wyf' hir dette / 2048
In somer sesoun þider wold he go
And may his wyf' and no wight' but' þay tuo
And þinges which . þat' weren not' doon in bedde
he in þe gardyn parformed hem and spedde 2052
And in þis wise many a mery day
lyued þis Ianuary and freische may
But' worldly ioye may not' alway endure
To Ianuary ne to no creature 2056
¶ O sodeyn hap . O þou fortune vnstable nota bene
lyk' to þe scorpioun so desceyuable
þat' flaterest' with þin heed whan þou wilt stynge
Thy tayl is deþ þurgh þin enuenymynge 2060
O . britel ioye . o sweete venym queynte
O monster þat' so subtily canst' peynte
Thyn ȝiftes vnder hiew of' stedfastnesse
That þou desceyuest' boþe more and lesse / 2064

why hastow Ianuary þus deceyued
That' haddist him for þy fulle frend receyued
And now þou hast' byreft' him boþe his yen
For sorw of' which desireth he to dyen 2068
Allas þis noble Ianuary fre
Amyd his lust' and his prosperite
Is woxe blynd and þat' al sodeynly
he wepith and he weyleth pitously 2072
And þer with al þe fuyr of' Ialousye
lest' þat' his wif' schuld falle in som folye [leaf 144]
So brent' his herte. þat' he wolde fayn
That' som man boþe hir and him had slayn 2076
For neyþer after his deth nor in his lyf'
Ne wold he þat' sche were loue ne wyf'
But' euer lyue as wydow in clothes blake /
Soul as þe turtil þat' lost' haþ hir make 2080
But' atte last' after a moneth or tweye
his sorwe gan aswage soþ to seye
For whan he wist' it may noon oþer be /
he paciently took' his aduersite 2084
Saue out' of' doute he may not' forgoon
That' he nas Ialous euermore in oon
which Ialousie it was so outrageous
That' neyþer in halle. ne in noon oþer hous 2088
Ne in noon oþer place neuer þe mo
he nolde suffre hir to ryde or go
But' if' þat' he had hond on hir alway
For which ful ofte wepeth freische may 2092
That' loueth Damyan so benignely
That' sche moot' outher deyen sodeinly
Or elles sche moot' han him as hir lest'
She waytith whan hir herte wolde brest' 2096
vpon þat' oþer syde Damyan
Bicomen is þe sorwfulleste man
That' euer was for neyther night ne day
Ne might' he speke a word wiþ fressche may 2100

As to his p*ur*pos of' no such matiere
But' if' þat' Ianuary most' it heere
That' had an hond vpon hir euermo
But' naþeles by writyng to and fro 2104
And priue signes wist' he what' sche ment/
And sche knew eek' þe fyn of' his entent
¶ O Ianuary what might' it þe auaile
If' þou might' see. as fer as schippes saile 2108
For as good is. blynd deceyued be /
As to be deceyued whan a man may see
Lo argus which þat' had an hundred eyen
For al þat' euer he couþe poure or prien [*leaf* 144, *back*] 2112
ȝet' was he blent as god wot' so ben moo
That' weneth wisly þat' it be nought' so
Passe ouer is an ease I say no more
This freissche may þat' I spak' of' so ȝore 2116
In warm wex hath emprynted þe cliket'
That' Ianuary bar of' þe smale wiket/
with which in to his gardyn ofte he went
And damyan þat knew al his entent' 2120
The cliket' counterfeted priuely
Ther nys no more to say but hastily
Som wonder by þis cliket schal betyde
which ȝe schal heeren if' ȝe wol abyde 2124
¶ O noble Ouyde wel soth saistow god woot
what' sleight' is it/ þough it be long & hoot'
That' he nyl fynd it out in som manere
By Piramus and Thesbe may men leere 2128
Though þay were kept' ful longe streyt ouer al
Thay ben accorded rownyng' þurgh a wal
Ther no wight' couþe han found out' swich a sleight
But' now to purpos er þat' dayes eyght' 2132
were passid. er þe moneth of' Iuyl bifille
That' Ianuary haþ caught' so gret' a wille
Thorugh eggyng' of' his wyf' him for to pleye
In his gardyn and no wight' but' we tweye 2136

That' in a morwe vnto þis may saith he /
Rys vp my wif'. my loue. my lady fre /
The turtlis vois. is herd my douue swete
The wynter is goon. with his raynes wete 2140
Come forth now with. þin eyȝen columbine
how fairer ben þy brestes þan is þe wyne
The gardyn is enclosed al aboute
Com forth my swete spouse out' of' doute 2144
Thow hast' me wounded in myn hert'. o. wyf'
No spot' of' þe knew I in al my lif' /
Com forth and let' vs / take oure desport /
I ches þe for my wyf' and my comfort 2148
Such olde lewed wordes vsed he /
On damyan a signe made sche [leaf 145]
That' he schuld go. biforn with his cliket'
This damyan þan haþ opened þe wiket' 2152
And in he stert' and þat' in such manere /
That' no wight'. it' mighte see nor heere
And stille he seet' vnder a bussch anoon
This Ianuary is blynd as is a stoon 2156
with Mayus in his hond and no wight' mo
In to his freische gardyn is ago
And clappid to þe wiket' sodeinly
Now wyf' quod he her nys but ȝe and I 2160
þat' art' þe creature þat' I best' loue
For by þat' lord þat' sit in heuen aboue
leuer ich had to dyen on a knyf'
Than þe offende deere trewe wyf' 2164
For goddes sake þenk' how I þe chees
Nought' for no coueytise douteles
But' oonly for þe loue I had to þe
And þough þat' I be old and may not se 2168
Beeth trewe to me and I wol telle ȝow why
Thre þinges certes schul ȝe wynne þer by
First' loue of' crist' and to ȝour self' honour
And al myn heritage toun and tour 2172

I ȝiue it' ȝow makith chartres as ȝow leste
This schal ben doon to morw er sonne reste
So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse
I pray ȝow first in couenaunt ȝe me kisse 2176
And þough þat' I be ialous wyt' me nought
ȝe ben so deep emprinted in my þought'
þat' whan þat' I considre ȝour beaute
And þer wiþ al þe vnlikly eelde of' me 2180
I may nought' certes þough I schulde dye
Forbere to ben out' of' ȝour companye
For verray loue þis is wiþouten doute
Now kisse me wyf' and let' vs Rome aboute 2184
This freissche may whan sche his worde herde
Benignely to Ianuary answerde /
But' first' and forward sche bigan to wepe
I haue quod sche a soule for to kepe [*leaf* 145, *back*] 2188
As wel as ȝe and also myn honour
And of' my wifhod þilke tendre flour
which þat' I haue ensured in ȝour hond
whan þat' þe prest' to ȝow my body bond 2192
wherfor I wil answer in þis manere
By þe leue of' ȝow my lord so deere
I pray to god þat' neuer dawe þe day
That' I ne sterue as foule as wo*m*man may 2196
If' euer I do to my kyn þat schame
Or elles I empaire so my name
That' I be fals and if' I do þat lak
Doth strepe me and put me in a sak' 2200
And in þe nexte ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentil womman and no wenche
why speke ȝe thus. but men ben euer vntrewe
And wo*m*men han reproef' of' ȝow euer newe 2204
ȝe haue noon oþer contenaunce I leue /
But' speke to vs of' vntrust' and repreue
And with þat' word sche saugh wher damyan
Sat' in þe buissh̄ and coughen sche bigan 2208

And wiþ hir fyngres signes made sche
That' damyan schuld clymb vpon a tre *nota*
That' charged was with fruyt/ and vp he went/
For verrayly he knew al hir entent' 2212
And euery signe þat' sche couthe make
wel bet' þan Ianuary hir oughne make
For in a letter sche had told him al
Of' þis matier how he worche shal 2216
And þus I lete him sitte vpon þe pirie
And Ianuary and may romynge mirye
¶ Bright was þe day and bliew þe firmament
Phebus haþ of' gold his stremes do*u*n I-sent 2220
To gladen euery flour with his warmnesse
he was þat' tyme in ge*m*mes as I gesse
But' litel fro his declinacio*u*n
Of' Caker. Ioues exaltacio*u*n 2224
And so bifel þat brighte morwen tyde
That' in þat gardyn in þe ferther syde / [*leaf* 146]
Pluto that' is kyng' of' fayerye
And many a lady in his compaignie 2228
Folwyng' his wif' þe queene preserpine
Ech after oþer. as right' as a lyne
whil þat' sche gadred floures in þe mede
In claudian ȝe may þe story rede 2232
how in þis grisly carte he hir fette
This king' of' fayry þan adoun him sette /
vpon a bench of' turues freissh and greene
And right' anoon þus sayd he to his queene / 2236
¶ My wyf' quod he þer may no wight' say nay
Thexp*er*iens so preueth euery day
The tresoun which þat' wo*m*man doth to man
Ten hundrid þousand. tellen I can 2240
Notable of' ȝour vntrouth and brutelnesse
O. Salamon wys and richest' of' richesse /
Fulfild of' Sapiens. and of' worldly glorie /
Ful worþy ben þy wordes to memorie 2244

To euery wight' þat' wit and resoun can
Thus praysith he ȝit' þe bounte of' man
Among' a þousand men ȝit' fond I oon
But of' wommen alle fond I noon 2248
Thus saith þe king þat' knoweth ȝour wikkednesse
And Iħc' filius Sirac / as I gesse /
Ne spekith of' ȝow but' selde reuerence
A. wilde fuyr and corrupt' pestilence 2252
So falle vpon ȝour bodies ȝit' to nigħt'
Ne se ȝe not' þis honurable knigħt'
By cause allas þat' he is blynd and old
his owne man schal make him cokewold 2256
loo wher he sitt'. þe lecchour in þe tre
Now wol I graunten of' my maieste /
Unto þis olde blinde worþy knigħt'
þat' he schal haue aȝein his eyȝen sigħt' 2260
whan þat' his wyf' wol do him vilonye
Than schal he knowe al her harlotrye
Boþe in reproef' of' her and oþer mo
ȝe schal quod preserpine and wol ȝe so [*leaf* 146, *back*] 2264
Now by my modres sires soule I swere
That' I schal ȝiue hir suffisaunt' answere /
And alle wommen after for hir sake
That' þough þay be in any gult' I-take 2268
with face bold þay schul hemself' excuse
And bere hem doun þat' wolde hem accuse
For lak/ of' answer noon of' hem schal dyen
Al had a man seyn a þing' wiþ boþe his yen 2272
ȝit schul we wymmen visage it hardily
And wepe and swere and chide subtilly
So þat' ȝe men schul ben as lewed as gees
what' rekkith me of/ ȝour auctoritees 2276
I wot' wel þat' þis Iew þis Salamon
Fond of' vs wommen fooles many oon
But' þough he ne fond no good womman
ȝet' haþ þer founde many anoþer man 2280

wo*m*men ful trewe . ful good and vertuous
witnesse on hem þat' duelle in cristes hous
with martirdom þay proued her constaunce
The romayn gestes eek' make remembraunce 2284
Of' many a verray trewe wyf' also ·
But' sire be nought' wrath al be it so
Though þat' he sayd he fond no good wo*m*man
I pray ȝow tak' þe sentens of' þe man 2288
he mente þus þat' in souereign bounte
Nis noon but' god þat' sit' in trinite
Ey for verrey god þat nys but oon
what' make ȝe so moche of' Salamon 2292
what' þough he made a temple goddes hous
what' þough he were riche and glorious
So made he eek' a temple of' fals godis
How might' he do a þing' þat more forbod is 2296
Par de als fair as ȝe his name emplastre
he was a lecchour and an ydolastre
And in his eelde he verraily god forsook'
And if' god ne had as saiþ þe book' 2300
I-spared him for his fadres sake he scholde
Haue left' his regne raþer þan he wolde [*leaf* 147]
I sette right' nought' of' þe vilonye
That ȝe of' wo*m*men write a boterflie 2304
I am a womman needes most' I speke
Or elles swelle til myn herte breke
For syn sche sayd þat' we ben iangleresses
As euer hool I moote brouke my tresses 2308
I schal not' spare for no curtesye /
To speke him harm þat' wold vs vilonye
Dame quod þis pluto be no lenger wroth
I ȝiue it' vp but/ sith I swere myn oth 2312
That' I wil g*r*aunte him his sight' agein
My word schal stonde I warne ȝow certeyn
I am a kyng' it' sit' me nought' to lye
And I quod sche a queen of' faierie 2316

hir answer schal sche haue I vndertake
Let' vs no mo wordes her-of' make
For soth I wol no lenger ȝow contrarie
·.· Now let' vs turne agayn to Ianuarye 2320
That' in þis gardyn with þis faire may
Syngeþ ful merier þan þe papiniay
ȝow loue I best' and schal and oþer noon
So long' about' þe aleys is he goon 2324
Til he was come agaynes þilke pirie
wher as þis damyan sittith ful mirye
On heigh among' þe freische leeuys greene
This freissche may þat' is so bright' and scheene 2328
Gan for to syke and sayd allas my syde
Now sir quod sche for ought' þat' may bityde
I most' han of' þe peres þat I see
Or I moot' dye so sore longith me 2332
To eten of' þe smale peris greene
Help for hir loue þat' is of' heuen queene
I telle ȝow wel a wo*m*man in my plyt'
May haue to fruyt so gret' an appetyt' 2336
þat' sche may deyen. but' sche it haue
Allas quod he þat' I nad heer a knaue
That' couthe clymbe allas allas quod he
For I am blynd. ȝe sire no fors quod sche [*leaf* 147, *back*] 2340
But' wolde ȝe vouche sauf' for goddes sake
The piry inwith ȝour armes for to take
For wel I woot' þat' ȝe mys-truste me
Than schold I clymbe wel y-nough quod sche 2344
So I my foot' might' set' vpon ȝour bak'
Certes quod he þer on schal be no lak'
Might' I ȝow helpe wiþ myn herte blood
he stoupith doun and on his bak' sche stood 2348
And caught' hir by a twist' and vp sche goth
ladys I pray ȝow þat' ȝe be not' wroþ
I can not glose I am a rude man
And sodeinly anoon þis damyan 2352

Gan pullen vp þe smok' and in he throng
And whan þat' pluto /saugh þis grete wrong'
To Ianuary he ȝaf' his sight' agayn
[. 2356
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Ne was þer neuer man of' þing' so fayn
But' on his wif' his þought' was euermo
Vp to þe tree he kest' his eyȝen tuo / 2360
And seigh þat' damyan his wyf' had dressid
In which maner it may not' ben expressid
But' if' I wolde speke vncurteisly
And vp he ȝaf' a roryng' and a cry 2364
As doth þe moder whan þe child schal dye
Out'. help. allas. harrow. he gan to crie
O stronge lady stoure what dos þow
And sche answerith sire what' eylith ȝow 2368
haue paciens and resoun in ȝour mynde
I haue ȝow holpen on boþe ȝour eyen blynde
vp peril of' my soule I schal not' lyen
As me was taught' to hele with ȝour yen 2372
was noþing' bet'. for to make ȝow see
Than stroggle wiþ a man vpon a tree
God woot I dede it in ful good entent
Stroggle quod he! ȝe algat' in it went 2376
God ȝiue ȝow boþe on schames deth to dyen
He swyued þe. I saugh it wiþ myn yen
And elles be I honged by þe hals
Than is quod sche medicine fals [*leaf* 148] 2380
For certeynly if' þat' ȝe mighten see
ȝe wold not' say tho wordes vnto me
ȝe han som glymsyng' and no parfyt sight'
I se quod he as wel as euer I might' 2384
Thankid be god wiþ boþe myn yen tuo
And by my trouth me þought he did þe so
ȝe. mase. mase. goode sire quod sche
This þank' haue I for I haue maad ȝow see 2388

Allas quod sche þat' euer I was so kynde
Now dame quod he let' al passe out of' mynde
Com doun my leef' and if' I haue myssayd
God help me so as I am euel appayd 2392
But' by my fader soule I wende haue seyn
how þat' þis damyan had by þe leyn
And þat' þy smok' had layn vpon þy brest
ȝe sire quod sche ȝe may wene as ȝow lest/ 2396
But sire a man þat' wakith out' of' his slep
He may not' sodeynly wel take keep
vpon a þing' ne seen it' parfytly
Til þat' he be adawed verrayly 2400
Right' so a man þat' long' haþ blynd I-be
Ne may not' sodeynly so wel I-se
First' whan þe sight' is newe comen agayn
As he þat' haþ a day or tuo I-sayn 2404
Til þat' ȝour sight' y-stablid be a while
þer may ful many a sighte ȝow bigile
Beþ war I pray ȝow for by heuen king'
Ful many man wenith for to se a þing' 2408
And it' is al anoþer þan it/ semeth
he þat' mys conceyueth he mys demeth
And wiþ þat' word sche leep doun fro þe tre
This Ianuary who is glad but he 2412
he kissith hir and clippith hir ful ofte
And on hir wombe he strokith hir ful ofte
And to his paleys hom he hath hir lad
Now goode men I pray ȝow to be glad 2416
Thus endith her my tale of' Ianuarye
God blesse vs and his moder seinte marie / AmeN. [leaf 148, back]

¶ Here endith the marchauntes tale

[*Small break in MS.*]

Ey goddes mercy sayd our hoste þo
Now such a wyf' I pray god keep me fro 2420
lo whiche sleightes and subtilitees
In wommen ben for ay as busy as bees
Ben þay vs seely men for to desceyue
And from a soth.. euer wol þay weyue 2424
By this marchaundes tale it proueth wel
But' douteles as trewe as eny steel
I haue a wyf' þough þat' sche pore be
But' of' hir tonge a labbyng' schrewe is sche 2428
And ȝit' sche hath an heep of' vices mo
Ther-of' no fors let' alle such þinges go
But' wite ȝe what' in counseil be it seyd
Me rewith sore I am vnto hir teyd 2432
And if' I scholde reken euery vice
which þat' sche hath I-wis I were to nyce
And cause why. it schuld reported be
And told to hir of' som of' þis meyne 2436
Of' whom it' needith not' for to declare
Syn wommen connen oute such chaffare
And eek' my witte suffisith nought' þerto
To tellen al wherfor my tale is do 2440

[*No gap in the MS.*]

GROUP F. FRAGMENT VII.

§ 1. THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ Sir Squier com forþ. if' þat' ȝour wille be
And say vs a tale for certes ȝe
Connen þer-on as moche as ony man
¶ Nay sire quod he. but' I wil say as I can 4
wiþ herty wil. for I wil not rebelle
Against' ȝour wille. a tale wil I telle
Haue me excused if' þat' I speke amys
My wil is good. and þerto my tale is this. 8

¶ Her endith þe prologe

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And her bygynneth þe Squyeres tale

AT Sarray in þe lond of' Tartary [*leaf* 149]
Ther dwelled a kyng' þat' werryed russy
Thurgh which þer deyed many a doughty man
This nobil kyng' was cleped Cambynskan 12
which in his tyme was of' so gret' renoun
That' þer nas nowher in no regioun
So excellent a lord in alle þing' /
Him lakked nought' þat' longed to a kyng 16
As of' þe secte of' which þat' he was born
he kept' his lawe. to which he was sworn
And þerto he was hardy wys and riche /
And pitous and Iust' alway yliche 20
Soth of' his word benign and honurable
Of' his corage as eny centre stable
ʒong' freisch and strong' in armes desirous
As eny bachiler of' al his hous 24
A fair person he was and fortunat'
And kepte so wel his real astat
That' þer was no wher such a ryal man
This noble kyng' þis tartre þis Cambynskan 28
hadde tuo sones by Elcheta his wyf'
Of' which þe eldest/ highte Algaryf'
That' oþer was I-cleped Samballo
A doughter' had þis worthi king' also 32
That' ʒongest' was and highte Canace
But' for to telle ʒou al hir beaute
It' lith not' on my tong' ne my connyng'
I dar nouʒt' vndertake so heigh a þing' 36

Myn englissh eek' is insufficient
he moste be a Rethor excellent'
That couþ his colours longyng' for þat' art'
If' he schold hir discryue in eny part 40
I am non such I mot' speke as I can
And so bifel it' þat' þis Cambynskan
haþ twenty wynter born his dyademe
As he was wont fro ȝer to ȝer I deme 44
he leet' þe fest' of' his natiuite:
Don cryen þurgh̄ Sarray his Cite
The last' Idus of' march̄ after þe ȝeer [*leaf* 149, *back*]
Phebus þe sonne was Ioly and cleer 48
For he was neigh̄ his exaltacio*u*n
In marcȝ face and in his mansio*u*n
In aries þe colerik' þe hote signe
Ful lusty was the wedir and benigne 52
For which þe foules aȝein þe sonne scheene
what' for þe sesoun & for þe ȝonge greene
Ful lowde song' in here affecciou*n*s
hem semed haue geten hem p*ro*teccio*u*ns 56
Aȝens þe swerd of' wynter kene and cold
This Cambynskan of' which I haue told
In royal vesture sittyng' on his deys
with dyadem ful heigh in his paleys 60
And held his fest'. solempne and so riche
That' in þis worlde was þer noon it' liche
Of' which if' I schal tellen al þarray
Than wold it' occupie a someres day 64
And eek' it' neediþ nouȝt' for to deuyse
At' euery cours þe ordre and þe seruyse
I wol nat' tellen of' her straunge sewes
Ne of' her swannes ne here hero*u*n-sewes 68
Ek' in þat' lond as tellen knightes olde
Ther is som mete þat' is ful-deynte holde
That' in þis lond men recch of' it but smal
Ther is no man it may reporten al 72

I wol not' tarien ȝou for it is pryme
And for it' is no fruyt' but' los of' tyme
vnto my purpos. I wol haue my recours
That' so bifelle after þe þridde cours 76
whil þat' þe kyng' sit þus in his nobleye
herkyng' his mynstrales her þinges pleye
Byforn him atte boord deliciously
In atte halle dore al sodeynly 80
Ther com a knight vpon a steed of' bras
And in his hond a brod myrour of' glas
Vpon his thomb he had of' gold a ryng'
And by his side a naked swerd hangyng' 84
And vp he rideth to þe heyghe bord [*leaf* 150]
In al þe halle ne was þer spoke a word
For meruayl of' þis knight' him to byholde
Ful besily þey wayten ȝong' and olde 88
This straunge knigh̄t' þat' cam þus sodeynly
Al armed sauf' his heed ful richely:
Salued the kyng' and queen and lordes alle
By ordre as þey seten in to halle / 92
with so heigh̄ reuerens and obs*er*uaunce
As wel in speche as in contynaunce /
That' Ewen with his olde curtesye
They he come aȝein out' of' fayrye 96
Ne couþe him nouȝt' amende wiþ no word
And after þis biforn þe highe bord
he with a manly vois sayd his message
After þe forme vsed in his langage 100
wiþouten vice of' sillabil or letter
And for his tale schulde seme þe better
Accorda*un*t' to his wordes was his cheere
As techeth art' of' speche hem þat it leere 104
Al be it þat' I can nat' sowne his style
Ne can nat' clymben ouer so heigh̄ a style /
ȝit' say I þis as to comun entent
Thus moche amounteth al þat euer' he ment' 108

If' it' so be þat' I haue it' in mynde /
¶ he sayd þe kyng' of' Arraby and yynde
My liege lord on þis solempne day
Saluteth ȝou as he best' can or may 112
he sendeth ȝou in honour of' ȝour feste
By me þat am redy at al his heste
This steede of' bras þat' esily and wel
That' can in the space of' o day naturel 116
This is to say in four an twenty houres
wher-so ȝou lust' / in droughþe or in schoures
Beren ȝour body in to euery place
To which ȝour herte wilneþ for to pace 120
wiþouten wem of' ȝou þurgh foul and fair
Or if' ȝou lust' to flee as heiȝ in þair
As doþ an egle whan him list' to sore [*leaf* 150, *back*]
This same steede schal bere ȝou eu*er*more / 124
wiþoute harm til ȝe be þer ȝou leste
Though þat ȝe slepen on his bak' or reste
And torne aȝein with wryþing' of' a pyn
he þat it wrought' cowþe ful many a gyn 128
he wayted many a constellacio*u*n
Er he had do þis op*er*acio*u*n
And knew ful many a seal and many a bond
¶ This mirour eek' þat' I haue in myn hond 132
haþ such a mighte / þat men may in it see
when þer schal fall*e* eny aduersite
Vnto ȝour regne vnto ȝour self' also
And openly who is ȝour frend or fo 136
And ouer al þis if' eny lady bright'
hath set hir hert' on eny maner wight'
If' he be fals sche schal his treso*u*n see
his newe loue and his subtilite 140
So openly þat' þer schal noþing' hyde
wherfor aȝeins þis lusty somer tyde
This mirour' and þis ryng' þat' ȝe may see
he haþ send to my lady Canacee 144

ȝour' excellente doughter þat' is heere
¶ The vertu of' þis ryng' and ȝe wol heere:
Is þis / þat' who. so lust' it for to were
vpon hir thomb / or in hir purs to bere 148
Ther is no foul / þat' fleeth vnder þe heuen
That' schal vnderstonden his steuen.
And know his menyng' openly and pleyn
and answer him in his langage aȝeyn 152
And euery gras. þat' growe þ vpon roote
Sche schal eek' know / to whom it' wol do boote
Al be his woundes neuer so deep and wyde
¶ This naked swerd þat' hange þ by my syde 156
Such vertu hath þat' what man þat' it' smyte
Thurghout' his armur it wol kerue and byte
were it as þikke as a braunched ook'
And what' man is I-wounded with þe strook' 160
Schal neuer be hool / til þat' ȝou lust' of' grace [leaf 151]
To strok' him wiþ þe plat' in þilke place:
Ther he is hurt'. þis is as moche to seyn
ȝe moote with þe platte swerd aȝein 164
Stroke him in þe wound and it' wol close /
This is þe verray soth wiþouten glose /
It' failleth nought' whil it is in ȝour hold
And whan þis knight' þus had his tale told 168
he rit out' of' þe halle and doun he light'
his steede which þat' schon as sonne bright'
Stant' in þe court' as stille as eny stoon
This knight' is to his chambre lad anoon 172
he is vnarmed and to mete I-sett'
This presentȝ ben ful richely I-fett'
This is to sayn, the swerd and the myrrour
And born anon vnto þe highe tour 176
with certein officers ordeynd þerfore
And vnto Canace þe ryng' is bore:
Solempnely ther sche syt' atte table
But' sikerly wiþouten eny fable 180

The hors of bras þat may nat be remewed
It stant as it were to the ground I-glewed
Ther may no man out of þe place it dryue
For noon engyn of wyndyng or polyue · 184
And cause why for þey can nouȝt þe craft
And *þer*for in the place þei haue it laft
Til þat þe knight haþ taught hem þe manere
To voyden him as ȝe schul after heere 188
Greet was þe pres þat swarmed to and fro
To gauren on þis hors þat stondeth so
For it so wyd was and so brod and long
So wel *pro*porcioned to be strong 192
Right as it were a steed of lumbardye
Ther-to so horsly and so quyk of ye
As it a gentil poyleys courser were
For certes fro his tayl vnto his eere 196
Nature ne art ne couþe him nouȝt amende
In no degre as al þe poeple wende
But eu*er*more her moste wonder was [*leaf* 151, *back*]
How þat it couþe goon and was of bras 200
It was of fayry as þe poeple semed
Diu*er*se peple . diuersly þey demed
As many hedes as many wittes been
They murmured as doþ a swarm of been 204
And made skiles after her fantasies
Rehersyng of þe olde poetries
And seyden it was I-like þe pagase .i. equus pegase*us*
The hors þat hadde wynges for to fle / 208
Or elles it was þe grekissch hors Synon
That broughte troye to destruccio*un*
As men may in þe olde gestes rede /
Myn hert q*uo*d oon is eu*er*mor in drede 212
I trow som men of armes ben *þer*inne
That schapen hem þis cite for to wynne
It were good / þat such þing were knowe /
Anoþer rowned to his felaw lowe / 216

And sayde it lyth for it is raþer lik
An apparence maad by som magik
As Iogelours pleyen at þis festes grete
Of sondry þoughtes þus þey Iangle and trete 220
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of þinges þat ben maad more subtily
Than þey can in her lewednes comprehende
They deemen gladly to the badder ende 224
And som of hem wondred of þe mirrour
That born was vp in to þe maister tour
How men might in hit suche þinges se
Anoþer answerd and sayd it might wel be 228
Naturelly by composicio*u*ns
Of angels and of heigh reflexio*u*ns
And sayde þat in Rome was such oon
They speeke of al-ceyt and Vitilyon 232
Of aristotle / þat writen in her lyues
Of queynte myrrours and p*ro*spectyues
As knowen þey þat han her bokes herd
And oþer folk haue wondred on þe swerd 236
That wolde passe þorughout eu*er*y þing [*leaf* 152]
And fel in speche of Thelophus þe kyng
And of achilles for his queynte spe*re*
For he couþe with hit boþe hele and dere 240
Right in such wyse as me*n* may wiþ þe swerd
Of which right now ȝe haue ȝour seluen herd
They speeken of sondry hardyng of metal
And speken of medicines þer wiþ al 244
And how and whan it schulde harded be /
which is vnknowe / algat vnto me /
Tho speeken þey of Canacees ryng
And seyden alle / þat such a wonder þing 248
Of craft of rynges herd þey neuer noon
Sauf þat he moyses and kyng Salamon
Had a name of connyng in such art
Thus seyen þe peple on euery part 252

But' naþeles som seiden þat it was /
wonder þing' to make of' ferne glas /
And ȝit' is glas nouȝt' like aisschen of' ferne
But' for þey han I-knowen it' so ferne 256
Therfor cesseth her ianglyng' and her wonder
And sore wondred som of' cause of' þonder
On ebbe and flood on gossomer and on myst'
And on alle þing' til þat þe cause is wist' 260
Thus Ianglen þey and demen and deuyse
Til þat' þe kyng' gan fro his bord arise
Phebus hath lost' þe angel merydyonal
And ȝit/ ascendyng' was a best' roial 264
The gentil lyoun wiþ his adryan
whan þat' þis gentil kyng' þis Cambynskan
Ros fro his bord þer as he sat' ful hye
Biforn him goth ful lowde menstralcye 268
Til he cam to his chambre of' Parementȝ
Ther as þer were diuers instrumentȝ
That' is y-like an heuen for to heere
¶ Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere 272
For in þe fissch̄. her lady sat' ful heyȝe
And lokeþ on hem with a frendly eyȝe /
This noble kyng' is set' vpon his trone /
This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone [*leaf* 152, *back*] 276
And in the daunce he gan with Canace /
her is þe reuel and þe iolyte
That' is not' able a dul man to deuyse
he most' haue knowe loue and his seruise / 280
And ben a festly man as freisch as may
That' schulde ȝou deuyse such array
who couthe telle ȝou þe forme of' daunce?
So vncouth and such a freisch countinaunce 284
Such subtil lokyng' of' dissimilynges
For drede of' Ialous folk' apparceyuynges
No man but launcelet' and he is deed
Therfore I passe ouer al þis lustyheed 288

A say no more but' in þis Iolynesse /
I lete hem til men to soper hem dresse
The styward byt' þe spices for to hye
And eek' þe wyn in al þis melodye 292
Thes vsschers and þes squyers ben agon
The spices and þe wyn is come anoon
They eet' and drank' and whan þis had an ende /
vnto þe temple as resoun was þey wende / 296
The seruise doon þey and soupen al by day
what' needeth ȝou to rehersen her array
Ech man wot' wel þat' a kynges feste
hath plente to þe lest and to the meste 300
And deyntees mo þan ben in my knowyng'
And after souper goþ þis noble kyng'
To see þis hors of' bras wiþ al his route
Of' lordes and of' ladyes al aboute / 304
Swich wondryng' was þer on þis hors of' bras
That' seth þis grete siege of' troye was /
Ther as men wondred on an hors also
Ne was þer such a wondryng' as was þo 308
But' fynally þe kyng' asked þe knight
The vertu of' þis courser and þe might'
And prayd him tellen of' his gouernaunce
The hors anoon gan for to trippe and daunce 312
whan þe knight' leyd hand vpon his rayne
And sayde sir þer is nomore to sayne [*leaf* 153]
But' whan ȝou lust' to ryde any where /
ȝe moote trille a pyn stant in his ere 316
which I schal telle ȝou bitwen vs two
ȝe moste nempne him to what' place also
Or what' countre ȝou luste for to ryde
And whan ȝe come þer ȝou lust' abyde 320
Bid him descende and trille anoþer pynne
For þer in lith þe fet' of' al þe gynne /
And he wol doun descend and do ȝour wille
And in þat' place he wol abyde stille 324

Though al þe world had þe contrary swore
he schal nat' thennes be I-þrowe ne bore
Or if' ȝou lust' to bid him þennes goon
Trille þis pyn and he wol vanyssh anoon 328
Out' of' þe sight' of' euery maner wight'
And come aȝein. be it' by day or night
whan þat' ȝou lust' to clepen him aȝayn
In such a gyse as I schal ȝow sayn 332
Bitwixe ȝou and me and *þer*for soone
Byd whan ȝou lust' þer nys nomor to doone
Enformed when þe kyng' was of' þe knight'
And had conceyued in his wit aright' 336
The maner of' þe forme and al þis þing'
Ful glad and blith̄ þis noble doughty kyng'
Repeyryng' to his reuel as biforn
The bridel is vnto þe tour I-born 340
And kept' among' his Iewels leef' and deere
The hors vanyscht' I not' in what manere
Out' of' her sight' ȝe get' nomore of' me
But' þus I lete him in his iolite 344
This Cambinskan his lordes festeyng'
Til wel neigh̄ þe day bigan to spryng'
Explicit' prima p*ars* //

[*No break in the MS.*]

Incipit' secunda p*ars*

The norice of' digestio*un* þe sleep
Gan to him wynk' and bad of' him take keep 348
That' merthe and labour wol haue his reste
with a galpyng' mouth he him keste
And sayd þat it' was tyme to lye doun [*leaf* 153, *back*]
For blood was in his dominaciou*n*) 352
Cherischeþ natures þanne q*uo*d he
They þankyn him galpyng' by two and þre
And eu*er*y wight' gan drawe him to his rest'
As sleep hem bad þey took' it' for þe best/ 356

here dremes schul not now be told for me
Ful were here heedes of[1] fumosite
That[1] causeþ drem of[1] which þer is no charge /
They slepen til it was prime large / 360
The moste part[1] but[1] it[1] were Canace
Sche was ful mesurable as wo*m*men be
For of[1] hir fader haþ sche take hir leue
To go to reste soon after it was eue / 364
hir luste not[1] appalled for to be
Ne on þe morwe vnfestly for to se /
And kept[1] hir firste sleep and þan awook[1]
For such a Ioye sche in herte took[1] 368
Boþe of[1] hir queynte ryng[1] and hir myrrour
That[1] twenty tyme chaunged hir*e* colour
And in hir*e* sleep right[1] for imp*ressio*un
Of[1] hir myrrour sche had a visio*un* 372
wher-for er þat[1] þe sonne vp gan glyde /
Sche cleped vpon her maistresse beside /
And sayde þat[1] hir*e* luste for to ryse
These olde wo*m*men þat[1] ben gladly wise 376
As is here maystresse answered hir anoon
And sayd madame whider wold ȝe goon
Thus erly for folk[1] ben all*e* in reste /
I wil q*uo*d sche aryse for me leste 380
No lenger for to slepe and walke aboute
hir maistres clepeth wommen a gret route /
And vp þey risen a ten o*þer* a twelue
vp ryseþ fresshe Canace hir selue 384
As rody and bright as is þe ȝonge sonne
That[1] in þe Ram is ten degrees I-ronne
Non heiher was he[1] whan sche redy was [[1] *first*, 'sche']
And forth sche walked esily a pas 388
Arayed after þe lusty sesou*n* soote [*leaf* 154]
lightly for to play and walke on foote
Nought[1] but[1] wiþ fyue or six of[1] hir meyne
And a trench fer in þe park[1] goþ sche / 392

The vapour which þat' of' þe erthe glod
Makeþ þe sonne seme rody and sot'
But' naþeles it' was so fair a sight'
That' it' made alle here hertes for to light' 396
what' for þe sesoun what' for þe mornyng'
And for þe foules þat' sche herde syng'
For right' anoon sche wiste what' þey ment'
Right' by here song' and knew al here entent' / 400
¶ The knotte why þat' euery tale is told
If' that' it' be taryed til lust' be cold
Of' hem þat' han hit after herkned ȝore
The sauour passeth euer lenger þe more 404
For fulsomnes of' þe prolixite
And by þis same resoun thinketh me
I schulde to þe knotte condescende /
And make of' hir walkynge sone an ende · 408
A-myddes a tree for-druye as whit as chalk'
As Canace was pleyyng' in hir walk'
There sat' a faukoun ouer hir heed ful hye
þat' with a pitous vois bigan to crye 412
I-beten hadde sche hir self' so pitously
That' al the woode resowned of' hire cry
wiþ boþe hir wynges to þe reede blood
Ran endelong' þe tree þer as sche stood 416
And euer in oon sche cried and schrygħt'
And wiþ hir bek' hir selue so sche pigħt'
That' þer nys tigre non ne cruel beste
That' dwelleþ eyþer in wood or in foreste 420
That' nold han wept' if' þat he cowde
For sorw of' hir sche schrigħt' alwey so lowde
For þer nas neuer ȝit no man on lyue
If' that' he couþe a faukoun discriue 424
That' herd of' such anoþer of' fairnesse
As wel of' plumage as of' gentillesse
Of' schap of' al þat' might' I-rekened be [leaf 154, back]
A faukoun peregryn þan semed sche 428

Of' fremde lond and euer as sche stood
Sche swowned now and now for lak' of' blood
Til wel neigh sche falleþ fro þe tre
This faire kynges doughter Canace 432
That' on hir fynger bar þe queynte ryng'
Thurgh which sche vnderstood wel euery þing'
That' eny foul may in his lydne sayn
And couþe answer him in his lydne agayn 436
haþ vnderstonde what' þe faukoun seyde
And wel neigh almost' for rewthe sche deyde
And to þe tree sche goth ful hastily
And on þis faukoun lokeþ pitously 440
And held hir lappe a-brod for wel sche wist'
The faukoun moste falle fro þe twist'
whan þat it swowned next' for lak' of' blood
A long while to wayten hir sche stood 444
Til atte last' sche spak' in þis manere
Vnto þe hauk' as ȝe schul after heere
¶ what' is þe cause if' it be for to telle
That ȝe ben in þat' furyaH peyne of' helle 448
Quod Canace vnto þis hauk' aboue
Is þis for sorwe of' deth or elles loue
For as I trowe þis ben causes tuo
That' causen most' a gentil herte wo 452
Of' oþer harm it needeþ nouȝt' to speke
For ȝe ȝour self' vpon ȝour self' awreke
which þat' preueþ wel þat' either Ire or drede
Mote ben enchesoun of' ȝour cruel dede 456
Sith þat' I see noon oþer wight' ȝou chace
For loue of' god so doþ ȝour selue grace
Or what ben ȝour helpe for west' ner Este
Ne saugh I neuer er now no bryd ne beste 460
That' ferde with himself' so pitously
ȝe sle me with ȝour sorwe so verrily
I haue of' ȝou so gret' compassioun
For goddes loue com fro þe tree a doun 464

And as I am a kynges doughter trewe [*leaf* 155]
If þat I verrayly þe cause knewe
Of ȝour disese if it lay in my might
I wold amenden it if þat I might 468
Als wisly help me grete god of kynde
And herbes schal I right ynowe fynde
To helen with ȝour hurtes hastyly
Tho schright þis faukoun more pitously 472
Than euer sche did and fil to ground anoon
And lay a-swowne deed as eny stoon
Til Canace hath in hir lap y-take
vnto þat tyme sche gan of swowne slake / 476
And after þat sche gan of swown abreyde
Right in hir haukes lydne thus sche seyde
That pite renneth sone in gentil hert
Felyng his similitude in peynes smerte 480
Is proued alday as men may see
As wel by werk as by auctorite
For gentil herte kepeth gentillesse /
I see wel þat ȝe haue on my distresse 484
Compassioun my faire Canace
Of verray wommanly benignite /
That nature in ȝour principles haþ set
But noon hope for to fare þe bet 488
But for to obeye vnto ȝour herte fre
And for to make others war by me
As by þe whelp chastised is þe lyoun
And for þat cause and þat conclusioun 492
whiles þat I haue a leyser and a space
Myn harm I wil confessen er I pace
And whil sche euer of hir sorwe tolde
That oþer wept as sche to water wolde / 496
Til þat þe faucoun bad hir to be stille /
And with a sighhe / þus sche sayd hir tille
¶ Ther I was allas þat ilke day
And fostred in a Roch of marble gray 500

So tendrely that' noþing' eyled me /
I wiste not' / what' was aduersite
Til I couþe flee ful heigh vnder þe sky [*leaf* 155, *back*]
Tho dwelled a tercelet' me faste by 504
That' semed welle of' alle gentillesse
Al were he ful of' tresoun and falsnesse
It' was I-wrapped vnder humble cheere
And vnder heewe of' trouþe in such manere 508
Vnder plesaunce and vnder besy peyne
That' no wight' wende þat' he couþe feyne
So deep in greyn he deyed his colours
Right' as a serpent hut' him vnder floures 512
Til he may see his tyme for to byte
Right' so þis god of' loue, þis ypocrite
Doþ so his sermonys and his obseruaunce/
vnder subtil colour and aqueyntaunce 516
That' sowneth vnto gentilesse of' loue
As in a thombe is al þe faire aboue
And vnder is þe corps whiche þat' ȝe wot
Such as was þis Ipocrite boþe cold and hot 520
And in this wise he serued his entent
That' sauf' þe feend noon wiste what he ment
Til he so long' had weped and compleyned
And many a ȝeer his seruice to me feyned 524
Til þat' myn hert to pitous and to nyce
Al Innocent of' his crouned malice
For-fered of' his deth as þoughte me
vpon his othes and his sewerte 528
Graunted him loue vpon þis condicioun
That' euermo myn honour and my renoun)
were saued boþe pryuy and apert
This is to sayn þat' after his desert 532
I ȝaf' him al myn hert' and al my þought
god woot' and he þat' oþer weye nought
And took' his hert' in chaunge of' myn for ay
But' soþ is sayd go siþens many a day 536

A trew wight' and a theef' þenketh nouȝt' oon
And when he saugh þe þyng' so fer I-goon
That I g*ra*unted him fully my loue /
In such a wyse as I haue sayd aboue / 540
And ȝeuen him my trewe hert' as fre [*leaf* 156]
As he swor he ȝaf' his herte to me /
Anon þis Tigre ful of' doublenesse
Fil on his knees with so gret' deuoutenesse 544
wiþ high reuerence and as by his chere
So lyk' a gentil louer of' manere
So rauysched as it semede for Ioye
That neuer Iason ne Parys of' Troye 548
Iason certes ne noon oþer man
Siþ lameth was þat' alþ*er* first' bygan
To louen two as writen folk' biforn
Ne neuer siþ þe firste man was born 552
Ne couþe man by twenty þousand part
Contrefete þe sophemes of' his art
Ne were worþy to vnbokel his galoche
Ther doublenes of' feynyng' schold approche 556
Ne so couþe þankyn a knight as he did me
His maner was an heuen for to see
To eny wo*m*man were sche neuer so wys
So peynteth he and kembeth poynt deuys 560
As wel his wordes as his continaunce
And I so loued him for his obeisaunce
And for þe trouthe I demed in his herte
That' if' so were þat' eny þing' him smerte 564
And were it neuer so litel and I it' wist'
Me þought' I felte deth at' myn hert' twist'
And schortly so ferforth þis þing' went'
That' my wil was his willes instrum*en*t 568
This is to say my will*e* obeied his will*e*
In all*e* þing' as fer as reso*u*n fill*e*
kepyng' þe bou*n*des of' my worschip euer
Ne neuer had I þing' so leef' ne leuer 572

As him god woot' ne neuer schal nomo
This laste lenger þan a ȝeer or two
That' I supposed of' him nought' but good
But' fynally atte laste þus it' stood 576
That' fortune wolde þat' he moste twynne
Out of' þe place which þat' I was Inne
wher me was wo it is no questio*un* / [*leaf* 156, *back*]
I can nat' make of' it descripcio*un* 580
For o þing' dar I telle boldely
I know what' is þe peyne of' deth þ*er*by
which harm I felt' for he ne mighte byleue
So on a day of' me he took his leue 584
So sorwful eek' þat' I went' verrayly
That' he had feled als moche as I
whan þat' I herd him speke and saugh his hewe
But' naþeles I þought' he was vntrewe 588
And eek' þat' he schulde repeire aȝeyn
wiþinne a litel while soþ to seyn
And reso*un* wold eek' þat' he moste go: for his honour
Wher-for I wold not' ben ayein his honour [*spurious*] 592
Than I made vertu of' necessite
And took' it' wel seþens it moste be
As I best' might' I had for him my sorwe
And took' him by þe hand seint' Iohn̄ to borwe 596
And sayde þus / lo I am ȝour al
Beþ such as I haue be to ȝou and schal
what' he answerd it needeþ nat' to reherse
who can best' say þan he, who can do werse // 600
whan he haþ al wel sayd þan haþ he doon
Therfor bihoueþ him a ful long' spoon
That' schal ete wiþ a feend þus herd I say
So atte last' he moste forþ his way 604
And forth he fleeth til he cam þer him leste
whan it cam him to purpos for to reste
I trow he hadde þilke text' in mynde
That alle þing' repeyryng' to his kynde 608

Gladeþ himself' þus sey men as I gesse
Men louen of' kynde newefangilnesse
As briddes doon þat' men in cage feede
For þeigh þou night' and day take of hem heede 612
And straw her cage faire and soft' as silk'
And ȝeue hem sugre hony breed and mylk'
ȝet' right' anoon as his dore is vppe
he with his feet' wil sporne doun his cuppe 616

And to þe wode

[*Eight leaves are here missing from the MS.*]

[*Brit. Mus. Harl.* 7334 *begins again, leaf* 157.]

lasse þan a þousand pound he wolde nought haue 1224
Ne gladly for þat somme he wolde not goon
Aurilius wiþ blisful hert anoon
Answerde þus. fy on a þousand pound
This wyde world which þat men say is round 1228
I wold it ȝiue if I were lord of it/
This bargeyn is ful dryue for we ben knyt
ȝe schal be payed trewly by my trouþe /
But lokeþ now for necligence or sloupe 1232
ȝe tarie vs heer no lenger þan to morwe /
Nay quod þis clerk haue her my faith to borwe
To bed is goon aurilius whan him leste
And wel neigh al night he had his reste 1236

what' for his labour and his hope of' blisse
His woful hert' of' penaunce had a lisse /
vpon þe morwe whan þat' it was day
To breteigne take þei þe righte way 1240
Aurilius and þis magicien bisyde
And ben descendid þer þay wol abyde
And þis was as þese bookes me remembre
The colde frosty seisoun of' Decembre 1244
Phebus wax old and hewed lyk' latoun
That' in his hoote declinacioun
Schon as þe burned gold with stremes brigh̄t'
But' now in Capricorn a-doun he ligh̄t' 1248
wher as he schon ful pale I dar wel sayn
The bitter frostes with þe sleet' and rayn
Destroyed haþ þe grene in euery ȝerd
Ianus sit' by þe fuyr wiþ double berd 1252
And drynkeþ of' his bugle horn þe wyn
Biforn him stont' þe braun of' toskid swyn
And Nowel crieþ euery lusty man
Aurilius in al þat' euer he can 1256
Doþ to his maister chier and reuerence
And peyneþ him to doon his diligence
To bringen him out' of' his peynes smerte
Or wiþ a swerd þat' he wold slytte his herte 1260
This subtil clerk' such rouþe had of' þis man
That' night' and day he spedeþ him þat' he can [leaf 157, back]
To wayte a tyme of' his conclusioun
This is to say to make Illusioun 1264
By such an apparence of' iogelrie
I can no termes of' astrologie
That' sche and euery wight' schold wene and saye
That' of' Breteygn̄ þe rokkes were a waye 1268
Or elles þey sonken were vnder þe grounde
So atte last' he haþ a tyme I-founde
To make his iapes and his wrecchednesse /
Of' such a supersticious cursednesse / 1272

His tables tollitanes forþ he brought
Ful wel corrected ne þer lakked nought
Neiþer his collect ne his expans yeeres
Ne his rootes ne his oþer geeres / 1276
As ben his centris & his argumentis
And his p*ro*porcionels conuenientis
For her equacio*u*ns in eu*er*y þing /
And by his þre speeres in his worching 1280
he knew ful wel how fer alluath was schoue
For þe heed of þilk fixe aries aboue
That in þe fourþe speere considred is
Ful subtilly he calkild al þis 1284
whan he had founde his firste mancio*u*n
He knew þe remena*u*nt by p*ro*porcio*u*n
And knew þe arisyng of þis moone wel
And in whos face and terme and euery del 1288
And knew ful wel þe moones mancio*u*n
Acordaunt to his operacioun
And knew also his other obseruaunces
For suche illusio*u*ns and suche meschau*n*ces 1292
As hethen folk vsed in þilke dayes
For which no lenger maked he delayes
But þurgh his magik for a wike or tweye
It semed þat þe rokkes were aweye 1296
Aurilius which ȝet dispayred is
wher he schal haue his loue or fare amys
Awayteþ night and day on þis miracle
And whan he knew þat þer was noon obstacle [*leaf* 158] 1300
That voyded were þese rokkes euerich oon
Doun to his maistres feet he fel anoon
And sayd I wrecched woful aurilius
Thanke ȝou lord and my lady Venus 1304
That me han holpe fro my cares colde /
And to þe temple his way forþ he haþ holde
wher as he knew he schold his lady se
And whan he saugh his tyme anoon right he 1308

with dredful hert and with ful humble cheere
Salued haþ his owne lady deere
My souerayn lady quod þis woful man
whom I most' drede and loue as I can 1312
And loþest' were of' al þis world displese /
Nere it þat' I for ȝou haue such desese /
That' I most' deye her at' ȝoure foot' anoon
Nought' wold I telle how me is wo bygoon 1316
But' certes ouþer most' I dye or pleyne
Ȝe sleen me gulteles for verrey peyne
But' of' my deþ þough þat ȝe haue no rouþe
Auyseth ȝow or þat' ȝe breke ȝour trouþe 1320
Repenteþ ȝow for þilke god aboue
Ȝe me sleen by cause þat' I ȝou loue
For madame wel ȝe woot' what/ ȝe han hight'
Nat' þat' I chalenge eny þing' of' right' 1324
Of' ȝow my souerayn lady but' ȝoure *grace*
But' in a gardyn ȝonde at' such a place
Ȝe wot' right' wel what' ȝe byhighte me
And in myn hond ȝour trouþe plighte ȝe 1328
To loue me best' god woot/ ȝe sayde so
Al be þat' I vnworthy am þerto
Ma dame I speke it for thono*ur* of' ȝow
More þan to saue my*n* hertes lif' right' now 1332
I haue do so as ȝe comaunded me
And if' ȝe vouche sauf' ȝe may go se
Doþ as ȝou list' haue ȝoure byheste in mynde
For quyk' or deed right' þer ȝe schul me fynde 1336
In ȝow liþ al to do me lyue or deye
But' wel I wot' þe rokkes ben aweye [*leaf* 158, *back*]
he takeþ his leue and he astoned stood
In alle hir face nas oon drop of' blood 1340
Sche wend neuer haue be in such a trappe
Allas quod sche þat' euer þis schulde happe
For wend I neuer by possibilite
That' such a monstre or merueyl mighte be / 1344

It is agayns þe proces of nature
And hom sche goþ a sorwful creature
For verray fere vnneþe may sche go
Sche wepeþ wayleþ al a day or tuo 1348
And swowneþ þat it rouþe was to see
But why it was to no wight tolde sche
For out of toune was goon aruegarius
But to hir self sche spak/ and sayde þus 1352
wiþ face pale and with ful sorwful chiere
In hir compleignt as ȝe schul after hiere
¶ Allas quod sche on þe fortune I pleyne
That vnwar, wrapped me hast, in þy cheyne 1356
Fro which tescape woot I no socour
Saue oonly deþ or elles dishonour
O n of þese tuo bihoueth me to chese /
But naþeles ȝet haue I leuer leese 1360
My lif þan of my body to haue schame
Or knowe my-selue fals or lese my name /
And with my deþ I may be quyt I-wys
Hath þer not many a noble wyf er þis / 1364
And many a mayden slayn hir-self allas
Raþer þan with her body doon trespas /
ȝis certeynly lo stories beren witnes
whan þritty tiraunt ȝ ful of cursednes 1368
hadde slayn phidon in athenes atte fest
Thay comaunded his doughtres to arest
And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit
And naked to fulfille her foule delyt 1372
In her fadres blood þey made hem daunce
vpon þe pauyment god ȝeue hem meschaunce
For which þese woful maydens ful of drede
Raþer þan þey wolde lese her maydenhede [leaf 159] 1376
They priuely ben stert in to a welle /
And drenched hemselfen as þe bookes telle
¶ They of mecene leet enquere and seeke /
Of lacidomye fifty maydenes eeke / 1380

On which þay wolden doon her leccherie
But' was þer noon of' al þat' companye
was slayn and wiþ a good entente
Ches raþer for to deye þan to assente 1384
To ben oppressed of' hir maydenhede
why schuld I þan to deyen ben in drede
¶ Lo eek þe Tyraunt/ aristoclides
That' loued a mayden heet' Stimphalides 1388
whan þat hir father slayn was on a nigħt
vnto dyanes temple goþ sche rigħt
And hent' þe ymage in hir hondes tuo
Fro which ymage wold sche neuer go 1392
No wight' might' of' hit/ hir hondes race
Til sche was slayn right' in þe selue place
Now siþ þat' maydens hadde such despit
To ben defouled with mannes foul delit 1396
wel aught' a wif' rather hirself' to sle
Than be defouled as it thenkeþ me
¶ what' schal I seyn of' hasdrubaldes wyf'
That at Cartage byraft' hir-self' þe lyf' 1400
For whan sche saugh þat' Romayns wan þe toun
Sche took' hir children alle and skipte a doun
In to þe fuyr and ches raþer to deye
Than eny romayn dide hir vilonye 1404
¶ Haþ nougħt' lucresse slayn hirself' allas
At' Rome whanne sche oppressid was
Of' tarquyn for hir þougħt' it' was a schame /
To lyuen whan sche hadde lost' hir name 1408
¶ The seuen maydens of' milifie also
han slayn hemself' for verray drede and wo
Raþer þan folk' of' Gawle hem schulde oppresse
Mo þan a thousand stories as I gesse 1412
Couþe I now telle as touching' þis matiere
¶ whan habradace was slayn his wif' so deere [*leaf* 159, *back*]
hir-seluen slough and leet' hir blood to glyde /
In habradaces woundes deepe and wyde / 1416

And seyde my body atte leste way
Ther schal no wight defoulen if I may
what schold I mo ensamples her of sayn . . .
Seþþen so many han hemseluen slayn . . 1420
wel raþer þan þey wolde defouled be /
I wol conclude þat it is best for me
To slen myself þan be defouled þus
I wol be trewe vnto aruegarius 1424
Or rather sle myself in som manere
As dede Democionis douȝter deere
By cause sche wolde nought defouled be /
O cedasus it is ful gret pite 1428
To reden how þy doughteren dyed allas
That slowe hemself for suche maner caas
As gret a pite was it or wel more
The theban mayden þat for nichonore 1432
hir-seluen slough right for such maner wo
Anoþer Theban mayden dede right so
For oon of macidone had hir oppressed
Sche with hire deþ maydenhede redressed 1436
what schal I sayn of Niceratis wif
That for such caas biraft hir self hir lyf
how trewe eek was cito alcebiades
his loue. þat rather to dyen ches 1440
Than for to suffre his body vnburied be
Lo which a wif was alceste quod sche
what saiþ omer of good penolope
Al grece knoweþ of hir chastite 1444
Par di of laodomya is writen þus
That whan out of Troye was Protheselaus
No lenger wol sche lyue after his day
The same of noble porcia telle I may 1448
wiþoute brutes kynde sche myȝt not lyue
To whom sche had al hool hir herte ȝyue
The parfyt wyfhod of artemesye
honoured is þurgh al þe Barbarie [leaf 160] 1452

O thena queen þy wifly chastite
To alle wyues may a mirour be
[. . . *no gap in the MS.: these lines are*
. . . . *known only in the Ellesmere MS.*] 1456
Thus playned Dorigen a day or tweye
Purposyng' euer þat' sche wolde deye
But' naþeles vpon þe thridde night'
hom cam arueragus þis worþy knight' 1460
And asked hir why þat' sche wept' so sore /
And sche gan wepe euer lenger þe more
Allas quod sche þat' euer was I born
Thus haue I sayd quod sche þus haue I sworn 1464
And told him al as ȝe han herd biforn
It' nedeþ nought' reherse it you no more
¶ This housbond wiþ glad chiere in good wise
Answerd and sayde as I schal ȝou deuyse 1468
Is þer aught' elles Dorigen but þis
Nay nay quod sche god me so rede & wis
This is to moche and it were goddes wille
Ȝe wyf' quod he let' slepe þat' may be stille 1472
It' may be wel peraunter ȝet' to day
Ȝe schal ȝour trouþe holden by my fay
For god so wisly haue mercy on me
I hadde wel leuer I-stekid for to be 1476
For verray loue which I to ȝou haue /
But' if' ȝe scholde ȝour trouþe kepe and saue
Trouþe is þe heighest' þing' þat men may kepe
But' wiþ þat word he gan anoon to wepe 1480
And sayde I ȝow forbede vp peyne of' deþ
That' neuer whil þe lasteth lyf' or breth
To no wight' telle þou of' þis auenture
As I may best' I wil my woo endure 1484
Ne make no contenaunce of' heuynesse
Þat' folk' of' ȝou may deme harm or gesse
And for he cleped a squyer and a mayde
Goþ forþ anoon wiþ Dorigen he sayde 1488

And bryngeþ hir to such a place anoon
Thay take her leue and on her wey þey gon
But' þay ne wiste why sche þider went
He nolde no wight' tellen his entent [*leaf* 160, *back*] 1492
[. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. 1496
. . . . *no gap in the MS.: these lines are*
. . . . *known only in the Ellesmere MS.*]
This squyer which þat' hight' aurelius
On dorigen þat was so amerous 1500
Of' aduenture happed hire to mete
Amyd þe toun right' in þe quyke strete
As sche was boun to goon þe wey forþ-right'
Toward þe Gardyn þer as sche had hight' 1504
And he was to þe gardynward also /
For wel he spyed whan sche wolde go
Out' of' hir hous to eny maner place
But' þus þay mette of' aduenture or grace 1508
And he salueth hir with glad entent
And askith hire whiderward sche went/
And sche answered half' as sche were mad
vnto þe gardyn as myn housbond bad 1512
My trouþe for to holde allas allas
Aurilius gan wondren on þis caas
And in his hert' had gret' compassio*u*n
Of' hire and of' hir lamentacio*u*n 1516
And of' Arueragus þe worþy knight'
That' bad hir hold al þat' sche hadde hight'
So loþ him was his wif' schuld breke hir trouþe
And in his hert' he caught' of' this gret' rouþe 1520
Considerynge' þe best' on euery syde
That' fro his lust' ȝet' were him leuer abyde
Than doon so high a cheerlissch wrecchednesse
Agayns fraunchis of' alle gentilesce 1524

For which in fewe wordes sayd he þus
Madame saith to ȝour lord arueragus
That' siþ I se his grete gentilesse
To ȝou. and eek' I se wel ȝour distresse 1528
That' him were leuer haue schame and þat' were rouþe /
Than ȝe to me schulde breke ȝoure trouþe
I haue wel leuer euer to suffre woo
Than I departe þe loue bytwix ȝow tuo 1532
I ȝow relesse madame in to ȝour hond
Quyt' euery seurement and euery bond
That' ȝe han maad to me as her biforn
Sith þilke tyme which þat' ȝe were born [leaf 161] 1536
My trouþe I plight' I schal ȝow neuer repreue
Of' no byhest' and her I take my leue
As of' þe trewest' and þe beste wif
That' euer ȝit I knew in al my lyf' 1540
But' euery wyf' be war of' hir byhest
On Dorigen remembreþ atte lest
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede
As wel as can a knyght' wiþouten drede 1544
Sche þankeþ him vpon hir knees al bare /
And hoom vnto hir housbond is sche fare /
And told him al as ȝe han herd me sayd
And be ȝe siker he was so wel a-payd 1548
That' it were impossible me to write
what schuld I lenger of' þis caas endite
Arueragus and Dorigen his wif'
In souereyn blisse leden forþ here lyf' 1552
Neuer eft' ne was þer anger hem bytwen
he cherisscheþ hir as þough sche were a queen
And sche was to him trewe for euermore /
Of' þese tuo folk' ȝe gete for me nomore / 1556
¶ Aurilius þat his cost' haþ al forlorn
Curseþ þe tyme þat euer he was born
Allas quod he allas þat' I byhight'
Of' pured gold a thousand pound of' wight' 1560

vnto þis philosophre how schal I doo
I se no more but' þat' I am for-doo
Myn heritage moot' I needes selle /
And ben a begger her may I not' duelle 1564
And schamen al my kynrede in þis place
But' I of' him may gete better grace
But' naþeles I wol of' him assay
At' certeyn dayes ȝeer by ȝer to pay 1568
And þanke him of' his grete curtesye
My trouþe wol I kepe I wol nouȝt' lye
with herte soor he goþ vn to his cofre
And broughte gold vnto þis philosophre 1572
The value of' fyf' hundred pound I gesse
And him bysecheth of' his gentilesce [*leaf* 161, *back*]
To graunte him dayes of' þe remenaunt
And sayde maister I dar wel make auaunt' 1576
I fayled neuer of' my trouþe as ȝit
For sikerly my dettes schal be quyt
Towardes ȝow how þat euer I fare
To goon a begge in my kurtil bare 1580
But' wolde ȝe vouche sauf' vpon seurte
Tuo ȝer or þre for to respite me
Than were I wel for elles most' I selle
Myn heritage þer is nomore to telle 1584
¶ þis philosophre sobrely answerde /
And seyde þus whan he þese wordes herde
Haue I not' holden couenaunt vnto þe?
ȝis certes wel and trewely quod he / 1588
Hastow nouȝt had þy lady as þe liketh
No no quod he and sorwfully he sikeþ
what' was þe cause tel me if' þou can
Aurilius his tale anoon bygan 1592
And told him al as ȝe han herd bifore
It' needeþ nat' to ȝou reherse it' more
he sayde arueragus of' gentilesse
had leuer dye in sorwe and in distresse 1596

Than þat his wyf' were of' hir trouþe fals
The sorwe of' Dorigen he tolde him als
how loþ hir was to ben a wikked wikked wyf'
And þat' sche leuer had han lost' hir lyf' 1600
And þat' hir trouþe sche swor þurgh Innocence
Sche neuer erst' hadde herd speke of' apparence
That' made me han of' hir so gret pyte
By cause hir housebond sente hir to me 1604
And right as frely sent' I hir to him agayn
þis is al and som þer is no more to sayn
The philosopher answerde leue broþer
Euerich of' ȝow dede gentilly to oþer' 1608
Thow art' a squyer and he is a knight
But' god forbede for his blisful might'
But' if' a clerk' couþe doon as gentil dede
As wel as eny of' ȝou it is no drede [leaf 162] 1612
Sire I relesse þe þy þousond pound
As þou right' now were crope out of' þe ground
Ne neuer er now ne haddest' knowen me
For sire I wol not' take a peny of' þe 1616
For al my craft' ne nought' for my trauayle /
Thou hast' y-payed wel for my vitayle /
It' is ynough and far wel haue good day
And took' his hors and forþ he goþ his way 1620
¶ Lordynges þis questioun wolde I axe now /
which was þe moste free as þinketh ȝow
Now telleþ me or þat' I ferþer wende /
I can no more my tale is at an ende / 1624
¶ Here endeth þe Frankeleynes tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And here bygynneth þe Secounde Nounes tale /

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[*THE PROEM.*]

(1)

THe minister and þe norice vnto vices 1
which þat' men clepe in englisch ydelnesse /
The porter at' þe gates is of' delicis
To eschiewe and by her contrary hire oppresse
That' is to say by leful besynesse / 5
wel oughte we to do al oure entente
Lest' þat' þe fend þurgh ydelnesse vs hente / 7

(2)

For he þat' wiþ his þousand cordes slye / 8
Continuelly vs wayteth to byclappe/
whan he may man in ydelnes espye /
He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe /
Til þat' a man be hent' right' by þe lappe / 12
He is nouȝt' war þe fend haþ him in honde /
wel oughte we wirche and ydelnes wiþstonde / 14

(3)

And þough men dredde neuer for to deye 15
ȝet' seen men wel by resoun douteles
That' ydelnes is roten sloggardye
Of' which þer comeþ neuer good encres
And sin þat' slouþ her holdeþ in a lees 19
Oonly to sleep and for to ete and drynke
And to deuoure al þat' oþer swynke 21

(4)

And for to put' vs from such ydelne 22
That' cause is of' so gret' confusioun
I haue her doon my faithful busynes [leaf 162, back]
After þe legende in translacioun
Right' of' þis glorious lif' and passioun 26
Thou with þi garlond wrought' wiþ rose and lylye
The mene I mayde and martir cecilie 28

(5)

And þou þat' flour of' virgines art alle / Innocacio ad mariam 29
Of' whom þat' Bernard lust' so wel to write /
To þe at' my bygynnyng' first' I calle
Thou comfort' of' vs wrecches do me endite
Thy maydenes deþ þat' whan þurgh hire merite 33
Theternal lif' and of' þe feend victorie
As man may after reden in hir storie 35

(6)

Thou mayde and moder doughter of' þi sone / 36
Thow welle of' mercy synful soules cure
In whom þat' god of' bountes chees to wone
Thou humble and heyh̄ ouer euery creature
Thow nobelest' so ferforþ oure nature 40
That' no disdeyn þe maker had of' kynde /
his sone in blood and fleissh̄ to cloþe and wynde / 42

(7)

Wiþinne þe cloyster of' þi blisful sydes 43
Took' mannes schap þe eternal loue and pees
That' of' þe trine compas lord and guyde is
whom erþe and see and heuen out of' relees
Ay herien and þou virgine wemmeles 47
Bar of' þy body and dwellest' mayden pure
The creatour of' euery creature / 49

(8)

Assembled is in þy magnificence 50
with mercy goodnes and with such pitee
That' þou þat art þe soune of' excellence
But oonly helpist' hem þat' prayen þe
But' often tyme of' þy benignite 54
Ful frely er þat' men þin help biseche
Thou gost' biforn and art her lyfes leche / 56

(9)

Now help þou meke and blisful faire mayde / 57
Me flemed wrecche in þis desert' of' galle
Thenk' on þe wo*m*man canace þat' sayde
That' whelpes ete some of' þe cro*m*mes alle
That' from her lordes table ben I-falle / 61
And þough þat' I vnworthy sone of' Eue [*leaf* 163]
Be synful / ȝett' accepte my bileue 63

(10)

And for þat' faith is deth wiþouten werkis 64
So for to werken ȝiue me witt and space /
That' I be quit' fro þennes þat' most' derk' is
O þou þat' art' so fair and ful of' g*rac*e /
Be myn aduocat' in þat hihe place / 68
Ther as wiþouten ende is songe Osanne
Thou c*ri*stes moder douȝter deere of' Anne 70

(11)

And of' þi light' my soule in p*ri*soun light' 71
That' troubled is by þe contagio*un*
Of' my body and also by þe wight
Of euerich lust' and fals affeccioun
O heuen of' refuyt' O sauacio*un* 75
Of' hem þat' ben in sorwe and in destresse /
Now help for to my werk' I wil me dresse / 77

(12)

Ȝet' pray I ȝou þat reden þat I write / 78
Forȝeue me þat' I doo no diligence
This ilke story subtilly to endite
For boþe haue I þe wordes and sentence
Of' him þat' at' þe seintes reuerence 82
The story wroot' and folwen hir legende /
And pray ȝow þat' ȝe wol my werk' amende / 84

(13) [*THE TALE.*]

First' wol I ȝow þe name of' seint Cecile 85
Expoune as men may in hir story se /
It' is to say on englisch heuenes lilie
For pure chastenesse of' virginite
Or for sche witnesse hadde of' honeste 89
And grene of' conscience and of' good fame /
The soote sauour lilie was her name 91

(14)

Or cecile is to say þe way of' blynde / 92
For sche ensample was by way of' techynge
Or elles Cecily as I writen fynde
Is ioyned by a maner of' conioynynge
Of' heuen and lya and here in figurynge 96
The heuen is sette for þought' of' holynesse /
And lya for hir lastyng' besynesse / 98

(15)

Cecili may eek' be seyd in þis manere / 99
wantyng' of' blyndnes for hir grete light [*leaf* 165, *back*]
Of' sapience and of' þilke þewes cleere /
Or elles lo þis maydenes name bright
Of' heuen and loos comes of' which by right' 103
Men might' hir wel þe heuen of' peple calle /
Ensample of' goode and wise werkes alle 105

(16)

For leos peple in englissh is to say 106
And righ as men may in þe heuen see
The sonne and moone and sterres euery way
Right so men gostly in þis mayden free
Seen of faiþ þe magnanimite / 110
And eek þe clernes hool of sapience
And sondry werkes bright of excellence 112

(17)

And right so as þese philosofres wryte 113
That heuen is swyft and round and eek brennynge
Right so was faire Cecily þe whyte
Ful swyft and besy euer in good werkynge /
And round and hool in good perseuerynge 117
And brennyng euer in charite ful bright
Now haue I ȝow declared what sche hight 119

(18)

This mayden bright Cecilie as hir lyf saiþ 120
was comen of Romayns and of noble kynde /
And from hir cradel vp fostred in þe faiþ
Of crist and bar his gospel in hir mynde
Sche neuer cessed as I writen fynde 124
Of hire prayer and god to loue and drede
Bysechingʳ him to kepe hir maydenhede 126

(19)

And whan þis mayde schuld vnto a man 127
Y-wedded be. þat was ful ȝong of age
which þat I-cleped was walirian
And day was comen of hir mariage
Sche ful deuout and humble in hir currage 131
vnder hir robe of gold þat sat ful faire
Hadde next hir fleissh I-clad hir in an heire 133

(20)

And whil þe organs made melodie / 134
To god alloon in herte þus sang' sche /
O lord my soule and eek' my body gye
Vnwemmed . lest' þat I confounded be /
And for his loue þat deyde vpon a tre [leaf 164] 138
Euery secound or þridde day sche faste
Ay biddyng' in hire orisouns ful faste / 140

(21)

The nyght' cam and to bedde most' sche goon 141
with hir housbond as oft' is þe manere
And priuely to him sche sayde anoon
O swete and wel biloued spouse deere /
Ther is a counseil and ȝe wold it heere / 145
which þat' right' fayn I wold vnto ȝou saye
So that' ȝe swere ȝe schul it not' bywraye 147

(22)

Valirian gan fast/ vnto hir swere 148
That' for no caas ne þing' þat' mighte be
he scholde neuer mo bywreye hire
And þanne at' erst' þus sayde sche
I haue an aungel which þat' loueþ me 152
That' wiþ gret' loue wher so I wake or slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe 154

(23)

[. . . . . *No gap in the MS.*] 155
Iff' ȝe me touche or loue in vilonye
he right' anoon wil sle ȝou wiþ þe dede
And in ȝoure ȝouþe þus schulde ȝe dye
And if' þat' ȝe in clene loue me gye 159
he wol ȝow loue as me for ȝour clennesse /
And schewe to ȝou his ioye and his brightnesse/ 161

(24)

Valirian corrected as god wolde / 162
Answerde agayn if' I schal truste þe /
Let' me þat aungel se and him biholde
And if' þat' it' a verray aungel be /
Than wol I doon as þou hast' prayed me 166
And if' þou loue anoþer man forsoþe
Right' wiþ þis swerd þan wol I slee ȝou boþe / 168

(25)

Cecilie answerd anoon right' in þis wise 169
If' þat' ȝow list' þe aungel schul ȝe see
So that' ȝe trowe on crist' and ȝou baptise
Goþ forþ to Via apia quod sche /
That' fro þis toun ne stant' but myles þre 173
And to þe pore folkes þat þer duelle
Saith hem right' þus. as þat' I schal ȝou telle / 175

(26)

Telle hem I cecilie. ȝow vnto hem sent 176
To schewen ȝow þe good vrban þe olde / [leaf 164, back]
For secre needes and for good entente /
And whan þat' ȝe seint' vrban han byholde /
Tel him þe wordes which þat' I to ȝow tolde / 180
And whan þat' he haþ purged ȝou fro synne
Than schul ȝe se þat' aungel er ȝe twynne / 182

(27)

Valirian is to þe place y-goon 183
And right' as him was taught' by his lernynge
He fond þis holy old vrban anoon
Among' þe seyntes buriels lotynge
And he anoon wiþoute taryinge 187
Did his message and whan þat' he it tolde
vrban for ioye his handes gan vp holde 189

(28)

The teres from his eyȝen let' he falle 190
Almyȝty lord O. ihū crist' quod he /
Sower of' chaste counseil herde of' vs alle
The fruyt' of' þilke seed of' chastite
That' þou hast' sowe to Cecilie tak' to þe 194
loo lik' a busy bee wiþouten gyle /
The serueþ ay þin owne þral Cecile 196

(29)

For þilke spouse þat' sche took' right' now 197
Ful lyk' a fers lyoun sche sendeþ here
As meek' as euer was eny lamb to ȝow
And wiþ þat' word anoon þer gan appere /
An old man clad in white cloþes clere 201
That' had a book' wiþ lettres of' gold in honde /
And gan to-forn Valirian to stonde / 203

(30)

Valirian as deed fyl dou*n* for drede 204
whan he him say / and he him vp hente þo
And on his book' right' þus he gan to rede /
O lord. o feith oon god wiþouten mo
On *cri*stendom and oon fader of' all*e* also 208
Abouen all*e* and ouer all*e* euery where
[. 210

(31)

. 211
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. 215
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And pope vrban him cristened right' þere 217

(32)

Valirian goþ home and fint' Cecilie 218
wiþinne his chambre with an aungel stonde /
This aungel had of' Roses and of' lilie
Corounes tuo þe which he bar in honde
And first' to Cecilie as I vnderstonde [leaf 165] 222
he ȝaf' þat' oon and after can he take /
That' oþer to valerian hir make 224

(33)

Wiþ body clene and wiþ vnwemmed þought' 225
kepeþ ay wel þese corounes þre
Fro paradys to ȝou I haue hem brought'
Ne neuer moo ne schul þey roten be
Ne leese here soote sauour trusteþ me 229
Ne neuer wight' schal seen hem wiþ his ye
But/ he be chast' and hate vilonye 231

(34)

And þou valirian for þou so soone 232
Assentedist' to good counseil also
Say what' þe list' and þou schalt' haue þi boone
I haue a broþer quod Valirian þo
That' in þis world I loue no man so 236
I pray ȝow þat' my broþer may haue grace
To knowe þe trouþe as I doo in þis place 238

(35)

The aungel sayde god liketh þy request' 239
And boþe with þe palme of' martirdom
ȝe schullen come vnto his blisful feste /
And with þat' word tiburce his broþer com
And whan þat' he þe sauour vndernom 243
which þat' þe roses and þe lilies cast'
wiþinne hir hert'/ he gan to wondre fast / 245

(36)

And sayde I wondre þis tyme of' þe ȝer 246
whennes þat' soote sauour comeþ so
Of' Rose and lilies þat' I smelle her
For þough̃ I had hem in myn hondes tuo
The sauour mighť in me no depper go 250
The swete smel þat in myn hert' I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in anoþer kynde 252

(37)

Valirian sayd tuo corouns haue we 253
Snow whyt' and rose reed þat' schinen cleere /
whiche þat' þine eyȝen han no might to see /
And þou smellest' hem þurgh my prayere
So schalt' þou seen hem my lieue broþ*er*e deere 257
If' so be þou wilt' wiþouten sloupe
Bilieuen aright' and knowen verray trouthe / 259

(38)

Tyburce answerde says þou þus to me [*leaf* 165, *back*] 260
In soþenes or in drem I herkne þis
In dremes quod valirian han we be
Vnto þis tyme broþer myn I-wys
As now at' erst' in trouþe oure duellyng' is 264
how wost þou þis quod tyburce and in what' wise
Quod valirian þat' schal I þe deuyse 266

(39)

The aungel of' god haþ me trouþe y-taught' 267
which þou schalt' seen if' þat þou wilt' reneye
The ydols and be clene and elles nouȝt
And of' þe miracles of' þese corones tweye
Seynt' ambrose in his prefas list' to seye 271
Solempnely þis noble doctour deere
Comendeþ it and saiþ in þis maneere 273

(40)

The palme of martirdom for to receyue / 274
Seynt Cecilie fulfilled of goddes ȝifte
The world and eek hir chamber gan sche weyue /
witnes tyburces and Cecilies schrifte
To whiche god of his bounte wolde schifte 278
Corounes tuo of floures wel smellynge
And made his aungel home þe croune brynge 280

(41)

The mayde haþ brought þis men to blisse aboue / 281
The world haþ wist what it is worþ certeyn
Deuocio*un* of chastite to loue
Tho schewed him Cecilie al open and pleyn
That alle ydoles nys but þing in veyn 285
For þay ben doumbe and þerto þey ben deue
And chargeþ him his ydoles for to leue 287

(42)

Who so troweþ not þis a best he is 288
Quod tyburce if þat I schal not lye
And sche gan kisse his brest þat/ herde þis
And was ful glad he couþe trouþe espye
This day I take þe for myn allye 292
Sayde þis blisful faire mayde deere /
And after þat sche sayde as ȝe may heere 294

(43)

Lo right so as þe loue of crist/ quod sche 295
Made me þy brotheres wyf right in þat wyse
Anoon for myn allye heer take I þe /
Sin þat þou wilt thyne ydoles despise [*leaf* 166]
Go with þi bro*þer* now and þe baptise 299
And make þe clene so þat þou mowe biholde
The aungeles face of which þy broþer tolde 301

(44)

Tyburce answerde and sayde broþer dere/ 302
First' tel me whider I schal and to what' man
To whom quod he / com forth with good cheere /
I wol þe lede vnto þe pope vrban
Til vrban broþ*er* myn quod valirian 306
Quod tyburce wilt' þou me þider lede /
Me þenkeþ þat' it were a wonder dede / 308

(45)

Ne menist' þou nat' vrban quod he þo 309
That' is so ofte dampned to be deed
And woneþ in halkes alway to and fro
And dar nouȝt' oones putte forþ his heed
Men schold him brenne in a fuyr so reed 313
If' he were founde or if' men might' him spye
And we also to bere him companye 315

(46)

And whil we seken þilke diuinite 316
That' is I-hyd in heuen priuely
Algate I-brent' in þis world schal we be
To whom Cecilie answerde bodyly
Men mighten wel and skilfully 320
This lyf' to lese myn oughne dere brother
If' þis were lyuyng' oonly and noon oþer 322

(47)

But' þer is better lif' in oþer place 323
That' neuer schal be lost' drede þe nouȝt'
which goddes sone vs tolde þurgh his *grace*
The fadres sone þat' alle þing' hath wrought
And al þat' wrought' is wiþ a skilful þought' 327
The gost' þat fro þe fader gan procede
haþ sowled hem wiþouten eny drede 329

(48)

By word and miracle hihe goddes sone 330
whan he was in þis world declared heere /
That' þer was oþer lyf' þer men may wone /
To whom answerde Tyburce of' suster deere
Ne seydest' þou right now in þis manere 334
Ther nys but' oo god. o .lord. in soþfastnesse
And now of' þre how maystow bere witnesse [*f* 166, *bk*] 336

(49)

That' schal I telle quod sche er þat' I go 337
Right' as a man haþ sapiences þre
Memorie eyen and intellect also
So in oo being' in diuinite
Thre p*er*sones may þer right' wel be 341
Tho gan sche him ful besily to p*r*eche /
Of' cristes come and of' his peynes teche / 343

(50)

And many pointes of' his passio*u*n 344
how goddes sone in þis world was wiþholde
To doon mankynde pleyn remissio*u*n
That' was I-bounde in synne and cares colde /
Al þis þing' sche vnto Tyburce tolde / 348
And after þis thiburce in good entente
wiþ valirian to pope vrban he wente / 350

(51)

That' þanked god and wiþ glad hert' and light' 351
he cristened him and made him in þat place /
Parfyt' in his lernynge goddes knyght'
And after þis thiburce gat' such grace /
That' euery day he say in tyme and space / 355
The aungel of' god and eu*er*y maner boone /
That' he god asked / it were sped ful soone 357

(52)

It were ful hard by ordre for to sayne 358
how many wondres Iñc for hem wroughte
But atte last to tellen schort and playne ·
The sergeant3 of þe toun of Rome hem soughte
And hem byforn almache þe prefect broughte 362
which hem apposed and knew alle here entente
And to þe ymage of Iubiter hem sente 364

(53)

And saide who-so wil not sacrifise 365
Swope of his heued þis my sentence heere
Anoon þese martires þat I 3ou deuyse
Oon maxim*us* þat was an officere /
Of þe *pre*fectes and his counceilere / 369
hem hent. and whan he forþ þe seyntes ladde
him self he wept for pite þat he hadde / 371

(54)

Whan maxim*us* had herd þe seintes lore 372
he gat him of his tormentoures leue
And bad hem to his hous wiþoute*n* more [*leaf* 167]
And with her preching er þat it were eue
Thay gonne fro þe tormentoures to reue 376
And fro maxime and fro his folk echoone
The false faith to trowe in god alloone 378

(55)

Cecilie cam whan it was waxen nigh̃t 379
with prestis þat hem cristenid alle in feere /
And afterward whan day was waxen light
Cecilie hem sayde with a ful stedefast chere /
Now cristes owne kny3tes leef and deere 383
Cast al away þe werkes of derknes
And armith 3ou in armur of brigh̃tnes 385

(56)

Ȝe han forsoþe y-doon a greet batayle / 386
ȝoure cours is doon ȝoure faith han ȝe conserued
Goþ to þe coroun of' lyf' þat may not fayle /
The rightful iugge which þat' ȝe han serued
Schal ȝeue it ȝow as ȝe han it deserued 390
And whan þis þing' was sayd as I deuyse
Men ladde hem forþ to doon þe sacrifise / 392

(57)

But/ whan þey were to þe place y-brouȝt' 393
To telle schortly þe conclusioun
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right' nought'
But' on her knees þey setten hem adoun
wiþ humble hert' and sad deuocioun 397
And leften boþe her heedes in þe place
here soules wenten to þe king' of' grace / 399

(58)

This maximus þat' say þis king' betyde / 400
wiþ pitous teeres tolde it anoon right'
That' he here soules saugh to heuen glyde
with aungels ful of' clernes and of' light'
And with his word conuerted many a wight' 404
For which almachius dede him so bete
with whippes of' leed til he his lif' gan lete / 406

(59)

Cecilie him took' and buried him anoon 407
By Thiburce and valirian softely
wiþinne hire berieng' place vnder þe stoon
And after þis almachius hastily
Bad his ministres fecchen openly 411
Cecilie. so þat' sche might' in his presence [leaf 167, back]
Doon sacrifice and Iubiter encense / 413

(60)

But þey conuerted at hir wise lore 414
wepten ful sore and ȝauen ful credence
Vnto hir word and cryden more and more
Crist goddes sone wiþouten difference
Is verray god þis is al oure sentence / 418
That haþ so good a seruaunt him to serue
This with oon vois we trowen þough we sterue 420

(61)

Almachius þat herd of þis doynge 421
Bad fecchen Cecilie þat he might hir se
And alþer first lo þis was his axinge
what maner womman art þou quod he
I am a gentil womman born quod sche 425
I axe þe quod he though þe it greue
Of þi religioun and of þi byleue / 427

(62)

Ȝe han bygonne ȝour questioun folily 428
Quod sche þat wolden tuo answers conclude /
In oo demaunde ȝe axen lewedly
Almache answerde to þat similitude
Of whens comeþ þin answering so rude 432
Of whens quod sche whan sche was I-freyned
Of conscience and good faith vnfeyned 434

(63)

Almachius sayde takest þou noon heede / 435
Of my power and sche answerde him þis /
Ȝoure might quod sche ful litel is to drede /
For euery mortal mannes power nys
But lyk a bladder ful of wynd I-wis 439
For with a nedeles poynt what it is blowe /
May al þe bost of it be layd ful lowe / 441

(64)

Ful wrongfully bygan þou quod he / 442
And ȝet' in wrong' is þy perseueraunce
wostow nough how oure mighty princes fre
han þus comaunded and maad ordinaunce
That euery cristen wight' schal haue penaunce / 446
But' if' þat' he his cristendom wiþseye
And goon al quyt' if' he wil it reneye / 448

(65)

¶ Ȝoure princes erre as ȝoure nobleye doþ 449
Quoþ þo Cecilie and with a wood sentence / [leaf 168]
Ȝe make vs gulty and it is nouȝt' soþ
For ȝe þat' knowen wel oure Innocence
For as moche as we doon reuerence / 453
To crist' and for we bere a cristen name
ȝe putten on vs a crym and eek' a blame / 455

(66)

But' we þat' knowen þilke name so 456
For vertuous we may it not' wiþseye
Almache sayde cheese oon of' þese tuo
Do sacrifice and cristendom reneye
þat' þou mow now eschapen by þat' weye 460
At' which þe holy blisful faire mayde /
Gan for to laughe and to þe Iugge sayde / 462

(67)

O Iugge confus in þis nycete 463
wilt' þou þat I refuse Innocence
To make me a wikked wight' quod sche /
lo he dissimuleþ heer in audience
he starith and woodith in his aduertence 467
To whom almachius sayde vnsely wrecche /
Ne wostow nought' how fer my might' may strecche 469

(68)

Han nought' our mighty princes to me y-ȝiuen 470
ȝe bothe power and eek' auctorite
To make folk' to deyen or to lyuen
why spekestow so proudly þan to me
I speke not' but' stedefastly quod sche 474
Nought' proudly for I say as for my syde /
we haten deedly þilke vice of' pryde 476

(69)

And if' þou drede nouȝt a soþ to heere 477
Than wol I schewe al openly by right
That' þou hast' maad a ful greet' lesyng' heere
Thou saist' þy princes han I-ȝiue þe might
Boþe for to sleen and eek' to quike a wight' 481
Thou þat ne maist' but' oonly lif' byreue
Thou hast' noon oþer power ne no leue 483

(70)

But' þou maist' sayn þi princes han þe maked 484
Minister of' deþ for if' þou speke of' moo
Thow liest' for þy power is ful naked
Do way þy lewednes sayd almachius þo
And do sacrifice to oure goddes er þou go [*leaf* 168, *back*] 488
I recche nought' what' wrong' þat þou me profre /
For I can suffre it as a philosophre 490

(71)

But' þilke wronges may I not' endure 491
That' þou spekis of' oure goddis her quod he
Cecilie answered. O nice creature
Thou saydest' no word sins þou spak' to me /
That' I ne knew þer-wiþ þy nicete / 495
And þat' þou were in euery maner wise /
A lewed officer a vein Iustise/ 497

(72)

Ther lakketh no þing' to þin outer eyen 498
That' þou art' blynd for þing' þat we seen alle
That' it is stoon þat' men may wel aspien /
That ilke stoon a god þou wilt' it calle /
I rede þe let' þin hond vpon it falle / 502
And tast' it wel and stoon þou schalt' it fynde
Siþ þat' þou seest / not' wiþ þin eyȝen blynde 504

(73)

IT is a schame þat þe poeple schal 505
So scorne þe and laughe at' þi folye /
For comunly men woot' it wel ouer al
That' mighty god is in his heuen hye
And þese ymages wel þou mayst' espie 509
To þe ne to hemself' may nought' profyte
For in effect'. þey ben nouȝt' worþ a myte 511

(74)

Thise wordes and such oþer sayde sche 512
And he wax wroþ and bad men schold hir lede
hom to hir hous / and in hir hous quod he /
Brenne hir right' in a bath of' flammes rede /
And as he bad right' so was doon þe dede / 516
For in a bath þay gonne hir faste schetten
And nygh̄t' and day great' fuyr þey vnder betten 518

(75)

The longe night' and eek' a day also 519
For al þe fuyr and eek' þe baþes hete
Sche sat' al cold and felte of no woo
Hit' made hir not'. oon drope for to swete
But' in þat' bath hir lif' sche moste lete 523
For he almachius with ful wikke entente
To sleen hir in þe baþ his sondes sente 525

(76)

Thre strokes in þe nek he smot' hir þo [*leaf* 169] 526
The tormento*ur* but' for no maner chaunce /
he might' nouȝt' smyte hir faire necke a-tuo /
And for þer was þat' tyme an ordina*u*nce
That' no man scholde do man such pena*u*nce 530
The ferþe strok' to smyten softe or sore /
This tormentour ne dorste do no more / 532

(77)

But' half' deed with hir nekke coruen there 533
he laft' hir lye and on his way he went
The cristen folk' which þat' about' hir were /
wiþ scheetes han þe body ful faire y-hent
þre dayes lyued sche in þis torment' 537
And neuer cessed hem þe faith to teche /
That' sche had suffred hem sche gan to preche 539

(78)

And hem sche ȝaf' hir moebles and hir þing' 540
And to þe pope Vrban bytook' hem þo /
And sayd I axe þis of' heuen kyng'
To haue respit' þre dayes and no mo
To recomende to ȝow er þat' I go 544
These soules lo and þat' I mighte do wirche
heer of' myn hous p*er*petuelly a chirche 546

(79)

Seynt' vrban wiþ his Dekenes priuely 547
The body fette and buried it by nighte /
Among' his oþer seyntes honestely
hir hous þe chirch of' seynt' Cecily ȝit highte
Seynt vrban halwed it as he wel mighte 551
In which in to þis day in noble wyse
Men doon to crist' and to his seint' seruise / 553
Here endeth þe secounde Nonne hir tale of' þe lif' of seint Cecilie

[*No break in the MS.*]

And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Chanouns ȝeman

¶ *prologus*

Whan ended was þe lif/ of' seynt Cecile
Er we fully had riden fyue myle
At/ Boughtoun vnder blee vs gan atake
A man þat' cloþed was in cloþes blake 557
And vnder þat' he had a whit' surplice
his hakeney þat' was a pomely grice
So swete þat' it wonder was to se
It' semed he hadde priked myles þre / 561
The hors eek' þat' his ȝyman rood vpon [*leaf* 169, *back*]
So swette þat vnneþes might' he goon
Aboute þe peytrel stood þe foom ful hye
he was of' foom as flekked as a pye 565
A male tweyfold on his croper lay
It' semed þat he caried litel array
And light' for somer rood þis worþy man
And in myn herte wondren I bigan 569
what' þat' he was til þat' I vnderstood
how þat' his cloke was sowed vnto his hood
For which whan I long' had auysed me /
I demed him som chanoun for to be 573
his hat' heng' at' his bak' doun by a laas
For he had riden more þan trot' or paas /
He had I-pryked lik' as he were wood
A cloote leef' he had vnder his hood 577
For swoot' and for to kepe his heed from hete
But' it was ioye for to se him swete
His forhed dropped as a stillatorie
were ful of' plantayn and of' peritorie 581

And whanne þat' he was com he gan to crie
God saue quod he þis ioly compaignye/
Fast' haue I priked quod he for ȝour sake /
By cause þat' I wolde ȝou atake 585
To ryden in þis mery companye /
his ȝeman eek' was ful of' curtesye /
He seid sires now in þe morwe tyde /
Out' of' ȝour ostelry I saugh ȝou ryde / 589
And warned heer my lord and my souerayn
which þat' to ryden with ȝow is ful fayn
For his desport/ he loueth daliaunce
Frend for þy warnyng' god ȝeue þe good chaunce 593
Sayde oure host' for certes it wolde seme
Thy lord were wys and so I may wel deme
he is ful iocound also dar I leye
Can he ought' telle a mery tale or tweye 597
with which he glade may þis companye
who sire my lord / ȝe ȝe / wiþoute lye /
He can of' merthe and eek' of Iolite [*leaf* 170]
Not' but' ynough also sir trusteþ me 601
And ȝe him knewe / as wel as do I
ȝe wolde wonder how wel and þriftily
he couþe werke and þat' in sondry wise
he haþ take on him many sondry emprise / 605
which were ful hard for eny þat' is heere
To bringe aboute but' þay of' him it' leere /
As homely as he ryt' amonges ȝow
If' ȝe him knewe it' wolde be ȝoure prow 609
ȝe nolde nought' forgon his aqueyntaunce
For moche good I dar lay in balaunce
Al þat' haue in my possessioun
he is a man of' heigh discressioun 613
I warne ȝow wel he is a passyng' man
¶ wel quod our oost/ I pray þe tel me þan
Is he a clerk / or noon tel what' he is
Nay he is gretter þan a clerk' I-wis! 617

Sayde þe ȝyman and in wordes fewe /
Ost' and of' his craft' somwhat' I wil ȝou schewe
I say my lord can such subtilite
But' al his craft' ȝe may nought' wite of me / 621
And somwhat' helpe I ȝit to his worchynge
That' al þis ground on which we ben ridynge
Til þat' we comen ro Caunterbury toun)
he couþe al clene turnen vp so doun 625
And paue it al of' siluer and of' gold
And whan þis ȝeman hadde þus I-told
vnto oure oost' / he seyde benedicite
This is wonder merueylous to me 629
Syn þat þis lord is of' so heigh̄ prudence
By cause of' which men schuld him reuerence /
That' of' his worchip rekkeþ he so lite
his ouer slop it' is not' worþ a myte 633
As in effect/ to him so mot / I go
It' is al bawdy and to-tore also
why is þi lord so slottisch I þe preye
And is of' power better cloþis to beye / 637
If' þat' his dede accorde with þy speche / [*leaf* 170, *back*]
Telle me þat' and þat' I þe biseche /
¶ why quod þis ȝyman / wher-to axe ȝe me
God help me so for he schal neuer þe 641
But' I wol nough̄t' avowe þat' I say
And þerfor kep it secre I ȝou pray
he is to wys in faith as I bileue
That' at' is ouer-don it wil nouȝt' preue / 645
a righ̄t'. as clerkes sein it is a vice
wherfore in þat' I holde him lewed and nyce
For whan a man haþ ouer greet a witte
Ful ofte him happeth to mysvsen itte 649
So doth my lord and þat' me greueþ sore
God it amende I can say now nomore
Ther-of' no fors good ȝeman quod oure Ost'
Syn of' þe connyng' of' þi lord þou wost' 653

Tel how he doþ I pray þe hertily
Sin þat' he is so crafty and so sly
wher duellen ȝe if' it' to telle be
In þe subarbes of' a toun quod he / 657
lurking' in hirnes and in lanes blynde
wher as þese robbours and þeues by kynde /
holden here prive ferful residence
As þay þat' dor nouȝt' schewen her p*re*sence / 661
So faren we if' I schal say þe soþe
Now quod oure ost' ȝit' let' me talke toþe
why artow discoloured on þy face
Peter quod he god ȝiue it harde grace 665
I am so vsed in þe fuyr to blowe
That' it haþ chaunged my colour I trowe
I am not' wont' in no mirour to prie
But swynke sore and lerne to multiplie 669
we blondren euer and pouren in þe fuyr
And for al þat' we faile of' oure desir
For euer we lacken oure conclusio*un*
To moche folk' we ben illusio*un* 673
And borwe gold be it a pound or tuo
Or ten or twelue or many so*m*mes mo
And make hem wenen atte leste weye [*leaf* 171]
That' of' a pound we conne make tweye 677
ȝit is it fals and ay we han good hope
It' for to doon and after it' we grope /
But' þat' science is so fer vs biforn
we mowen nouȝt' al þough we had it sworn 681
It' ouertake it slyt' away so fast'
It' wol vs make beggers atte last'
Whil þis ȝeman was þus in his talkyng'
This chanoun drough him ner and herd al þing' 685
which þat' þis ȝiman spak' for suspeccio*un*
Of' mennes speche euer hadde þis chano*un*
For Cato*un* saiþ þat' he þat gulty is
Demeþ al þing' be spoke of' him I-wis 689

By cause of' þat' / he gan so neigh to drawe
his ȝeman þat' he herde al his sawe /
And þus he sayd vnto his ȝeman þo
Hold now þi pees and spek' no wordes mo 693
For if' þou do þou schalt' it' deere abye
Thow sclaundrest' me here in þis companye
And eek discouerest' þat' þou schuldest hide
ȝe quod oure ost tel on what so bytyde 697
Of' alle þis thretyng' recche þe nought a myte
In faiþ quod he no more do I but lite
And whan þis chanoun seih it wold not be
But his ȝeman wold telle his priuete 701
He fledde a way for verray sorwe and schame
A quod þis ȝeman her schal arise game
Al þat' I can anoon now wol I telle
Sin he is goon þe foule feend him quelle 705
For neuer her after wol I wiþ him meete
For peny ne for pound I wol byheete
he þat' me broughte first' vnto þat' game
Er þat' he deye sorwe haue he and schame 709
For it is ernest' to me by my fayth
That' fele I wel what' so eny man saith
And ȝet' for al my smert' and al my greef
For al my sorwe and labour and mescheef' 713
I couþe neuer leue it in no wise [*leaf* 171, *back*]
Now wolde god my wyt' mighte suffise
To tellen al þat' longeþ to þat' art/
But' naþeles ȝet' wil I telle ȝou part' 717
Sin þat' my lord is goon I wol nought' spare
Such þing' al þat' I knowe I wol declare

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE PREAMBLE.*]

¶ Narrat'

WIth þis Chanoun I duelled haue seuen ȝer
And of' his science am I neuer þe ner 721
Al þat' I hadde I haue lost' þer by
And god wot/ so haþ many mo þan I /
Ther I was wont to be right' freisch and gay
Of' cloþing' and of' oþer good array / 725
Now may I were an hose vpon myn heed
And where my colour was boþe freissch and reed
Now it is wan and of a leden hewe
who-so it vseþ sore schal he rewe 729
And of' my swynk' ȝet' blended is myn ye
Lo such auauntage it is to multiplie
That' slydynge science had me made so bare /
That' I haue no good wher þat' euer I fare 733
And ȝit' I am endetted so þer by
Of' gold I haue borwed trewely
That' whil I lyue I schal it quite neuer
lat' euery man be war by me for euer 737
what maner man þat' casteþ him þerto
If' he continue I holde his þrift' I-do
For so help me god þer by schal he not wynne
But empte his purs and make his wittes þynne 741
And whan he þurgh his madnes and folye /
Haþ lost' his owne good in ieupardie /
Than he exciteþ oþer men þer-to
To leese her good as he himself' haþ do 745
For vnto schrewes ioye it is and ese /
To haue here felawes in peyne and desese /

Thus was I oones lerned of' a clerk /
Of' þat' no charge I wol speke of' oure werk' 749
whan we ben þer as we schul exercise
Oure eluyssh craft' we seme wonder wyse
Oure termes ben so clergeal and queynte / [leaf 172]
I blowe þe fuyr til þat/ myn herte feynte / 753
what' schulde I telle ech proporcioun
Of' þinges which þat' we werke vp and doun
As an fyue or six ounces may wel be /
Of' siluer or som oþer quantite 757
And besy me to telle ȝow þe names
Of' Orpiment' brent' bones yren squames
That' in to poudre grounden ben ful smal
And in an erthen pot/ how þat' put' is al 761
And salt' y-put' in and also paupere
Biforn these poudres þat' I speke of' heere
And wel I-couered wiþ a lamp of' glas /
And of' moche oþer þing' what' þat' þer was 765
And of' þe pot'. and glas enlutyng'
That' of' þe aier mighte passe no þing'
And of' þe esy fuyr and smert' also
which þat' was maad and of' þe care and wo 769
That' we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge
And amalgamynge and calcenynge
Of' quyksiluer y-clept' mercury crude /
For alle oure sleightes we can nought' conclude / 773
Oure orpiment and sublyment mercurie
Oure grounde litarge / eek' on þe porfurye
Of' ech of' þese of' ounces a certayn
Nat' helpeþ vs oure labour is in vayn 777
Ne eek' oure spirites ascencioun
Ne eek' our matiers þat' lyn al fix a doun
Mowe in oure werkyng' vs no þing' auayle
For lost' is al oure labour and trauayle 781
And al þe cost' on twenty deuelway
Is lost' also which we vpon it lay

Ther is also ful many anoþer þing'
That is to oure craft' appertenyng' 785
Though I by ordre hem here reherse ne can
By cause þat' I am a lewed man
ȝet' wil I telle hem as þey come to mynde /
Though I ne conne nought' sette hem in her kynde / 789
As bol armoniak' verdegres boras [*leaf* 172, *back*]
And sondry vessels maad of' erþe and glas
Oure vrinals and oure descensories
Viols Croslets. and sublimatories 793
Concurbites and alembikes eeke
And oþere suche deere ynough a leeke
Nat' needith it' to rehersen hem alle
watres rubisyng' and boles galle 797
Arsnek' Sal armoniak' and brimstoon
And herbes couþe I telle eek' many oon
As Egrimoigne Valirian and lunarie,
And oþer suche if' þat me list' to tarie / 801
Oure lampes brennyng' boþe night' and day
To bringe aboute oure craft' if' þat' we may
Oure fournies[1] eek' of' Calcinacio*un* [1 *or* fourmes]
And of' watres albificacio*un* 805
Vnslekked lym salt' and glayre of' an ey
Poudres dyuers aissches dong' pisse and cley
Cered poketts. Sal petre vitriole
And dyu*er*s fuyres maad of' woode and cole / 809
Salt' tartre. alcaly and salt' preparat'
And combust matieres. and coagulat
Cley maad wiþ hors or mannes her and oyle
Of' tartre alym. glas. berm wort' and argoyle 813
Resalgar and oure matiers enbibing'
And eek' of' oure matiers encorporing'
And siluer citrinacio*un*
Oure cementynge and fermentacio*un* 817
Oure yngottes testes and many mo
I wol ȝou telle as was me taught' also

The foure spiritȝ and þe bodies seuen
By ordre as ofte herd I my lord neuen 821
The firste spirit' quyksiluer called is
The secound orpiment' þe þridde I-wis
Sal armoniac'. and þe ferþe bremstoon
The bodies seuen eek' lo hem heer anoon 825
Sol gold is and luna siluer we þrepe
Mars yren. Mercurie quyksiluer we clepe
Saturnus leed and Iubiter is tyn [leaf 173]
And Venus coper by my fader kyn 829
This cursed craft' who so wol excercise
he schal no good han þat' may him suffise /
For al þe good he spendeþ þer aboute
he lese schal þer of' haue I no doute / 833
who-so þat' list/ outen his folye
let' him come forþ and lerne multiplie
And euery man that' haþ ought' in his cofre
Let' him appiere and wexe a philosofre 837
Ascauns þat' craft' is so light' to lere /
Nay nay god wot' al be he monk' or frere
Prest' Chano*un* or eny oþer wight'
Though he sit' at' his book' boþe day and night 841
In lernyng' of' þis eluysch nice lore
Al is in vayn and parde moche more
Is to lerne a lewed man þis subtilte
Fy spek' not' þ*er*of'. for it' it' wil not' be 845
Al couþe he letterure or couþe he noon
As in effect' he schal fynd it al oon
For boþe tuo by my sauacio*un*
Concluden in multiplicacioun 849
I-liche wel whan þay han al y-do /
This is to sayn þay fayle boþe tuo
ȝet' forȝat' I to moche rehersayle
Of' watres corosif' and of' lymayle 853
And of' bodyes mollificacio*un*
And also of' here enduracioun

Oyles ablucio*un* and metal fusible /
To tellen al wold passen eny bible 857
That owher is wherfore as for þe best
Of alle þese names now wil I me rest/
For as I trowe I haue ȝow told ynowe
To reyse a feend al loke he neuer so rowe / 861
A nay let be þy philosophre stoon
Elixir clept. we sechen fast echoon
For had we him þan were we syker ynough
But vnto god of heuen I make avow 865
For al oure craft whan we han al y-do [*leaf* 173, *back*]
And al oure sleight he wol not come vs to
He haþ I-made vs spende moche good
For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood 869
But þat good hope crepeþ in oure hert
Supposing euer þough we sore smerte /
To ben relieued by him afterward
Supposing and hope is scharp and hard 873
I warne ȝou wel it is to seken euer
That future temps haþ made men disseuere
In trust þerof from al þat euer þey hadde /
Ȝet of þat art þay co*n*ne nouȝt wexe sadde / 877
For vnto hem it is a bitter swete
So semeþ it for nad þay but a scheete
which þay mighte wrappe hem in a night
And a bak to walke Inne by day light 881
They wolde hem selle and spenden on þis craft
Thay can nought stinte til no þing be laft
And euermore wher þat euer þey goon
Men may hem knowe by smel of bremston 885
For al þe world þay stynken as a goot
her sauour is so rammyssch and so hoot
That þough a man fro hem a myle be /
The sauour wol infecte him trusteþ me 889
Lo þus by smellyng and by þredbare array
If þat men list þis folk þey knowe may /

And if' a man wol aske hem priuely
why þay ben cloþed so vnþriftily 893
Rightt' anoon þay rounen in his eere /
And say if' þat' þay espied were
Men wold hem slee by cause of' here science
Lo þus þis folk' bytrayen Innocence 897
Passe ouer þis I go my tale vnto
Er þan þe pot' be on þe fuyr y-do
Of' metals with a certeyn quantite
My lord hem tempreþ and no man but he 901
Now he is goon I dar say boldely
For as men sayn he can doon craftily
Algate I wot' wel he haþ such a name [*leaf* 174]
And ȝet' ful ofte he renneþ in blame 905
¶ And wite ȝe how ful ofte it happeþ so
The pot' tobrekeþ and far wel al is goo
These metals been of' so gret violence /
Oure walles may not' make hem resistence 909
But' if' þay were wrought' of' lym and stoon
Thay percen so and þurgh þe wal þay goon
And some of' hem synken in to þe grounde/
Thus haue we lost' by tymes many a pounde 913
And some are skatered al þe floor aboute
Some lepe in to þe roof' wiþouten doute
Though þat' þe feend nought' in oure sight' him schewe /
I trowe þat' he wiþ vs be þat' schrewe / 917
In helle wher þat' he is lord and sire
Nis þer no more woo ne anger ne Ire /
whan þat' oure pot' is broke as I haue sayd
Euery man chyt' and halt him euel a payd 921
Som sayd it was long' on þe fuyr-makyng'
Some sayde nay it was on þe blowyng'
Than was I ferd for þat was myn office /
Straw quod þe þridde / ȝe been lewed and nyce 925
It' was nouȝt' tempred as it oughte be /
Nay quod þe ferþe stynt' and herkne me /

By cause oure fuyr was nought' y-maad of' Beech
That' is þe cause and oþer noon so þeech 929
I can not' telle wher-on it' was long'
But' wel I woot gret stryf' is vs among'
What' quod my lord þer is no more to doone /
Of' þese p*er*iles I wol be war eft' soone / 933
I am right' siker þat' þe pot' was crased
Be as be may be ȝe no þing' amased
As vsage is let' swoope þe floor as swiþe
Pluk' vp ȝour hertes and beþ glad and bliþe 937
The mullok' on an heep I-swoped was
And on þe floor y-cast' a caneuas
And al þis mulloc' in a syue I-þrowe /
And sifted and y-plukked many a þrowe 941
Par de quod oon somwhat' of' oure metal [*leaf* 174, *back*]
ȝet' is þer heer þough þat' we haue nought al
And þough þis þing' myshapped haþ a now
Anoþer tyme it may be wel ynow 945
Vs moste' putte oure good in aduenture
A marchaun / par de may not' ay endure
Trusteþ me wel in his p*rosper*ite
Somtyme his good is drowned in þe see / 949
And som tyme comeþ it' sauf' vn-to þe londe /
Pees quod my lord þe nexte tyme I wol fonde /
To bringe oure craft' al in anoþer plyte
And but' I do sire let' me haue þe wyte 953
Ther was defaute in som what' wel I woot'
Anoþer sayde þe fuyr was ouer hoot'
But' be it hoot' or cold I dar say þis
That' we concluden euermor amys 957
we faile of' þat' which þat' we wolden haue
And in oure madnesse euermore we raue
And whan we ben togideres euerichon
Eueriche man semeþ a Salamon 961
But' al þing' which þat' schineþ as þe gold /
Is nought' gold as þat' I haue herd told

Ne euery appel þat' is fair at' ye
Ne is not' good what' so men clappe or crye 965
Right' so lo fareth it' amonges vs
He þat' semeþ wisest' by Iesus
Is most' fool whan it/ comeþ to þe preef'
And he þat' semeth trewest' is a þeef' 969
That' schul ȝe knowe er þa I fro ȝow wende /
By þat' I of' my tale haue maad an ende /

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther is a chanoun of religioun
Amonges vs wold infecte al a toun 973
Though it as gret were as was Niniue
Rome alisaundre troye and oþer þre /
his sleight and his infinite falsnesse /
Ther couþe no man writen as I gesse 977
Though þat he mighte lyuen a þousand ȝeer
Of al þis world of falsheed nys his peer
For in his termes he wol him so wynde [*leaf* 175]
And speke his wordes in so sleygh a kynde 981
whan he comune schal wiþ eny wight
That he wil make him dote anoon right
But it a feend be as himseluen is
Ful many a man hath he bygiled er this 985
And wol if þat/ he lyue may a while /
And ȝet men ryde and goon ful many a myle /
Him for to seeke and haue his aqueintaunce /
Nought knowyng of his false gouernaunce 989
And if ȝow list to ȝeue me audience
I wol it telle here in ȝoure presence
But worschipful chanouns religious
Ne demeþ nought þat I sclaundre ȝoure hous 993
Al þough my tale of a chanoun be /
Of euery ordre som schrewe is par dee /
And god forbede þat al a companye
Schulde rewe a singuler mannes folye 997
To sclaundre ȝow is no þing myn entent/
But to correcten þat is mys I-ment

This tale was not oonly told for ȝow
But eek for oþer moo ȝe woot wel how 1001
That among criste apostles twelue /
Ther was no traytour but Iudas himselue
Than why schulde þe remenaunt haue a blame
That gulteles were by ȝow I say þe same 1005
Saue oonly þis if ye wol herkene me
If any Iudas in ȝoure couent be
Remewe him by tyme I ȝow rede /
If schame or los may causen eny drede / 1009
And beþ no þing displesed I ȝou pray
But in þis caas herkeneþ what I say ¶ Narrat
IN londoun was a prest an annueler
That þer In duelled hadde many a ȝer 1013
which was so plesaunt and so seruisable /
Vnto þe wyf wher as he was at table
That sche wolde suffre him no þing for to pay
For bord ne cloþing went he neuer so gay 1017
And spendyng siluer had he right ynough [*leaf* 175, *back*]
Ther-of no force I wol procede as now
And telle forþ my tale of þe chanoun
That brought þis prest to confusioun 1021
This false chanoun cam vpon a day
Vnto þe prestes chambre wher he lay
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of gold and he wold quyt hit him ageyn 1025
Lene me a mark quod he but dayes þre /
And at my day I wil it quyte þe /
And if so be þat þou fynde me fals
Anoþer day hong/ me vp by þe hals 1029
This prest him took a mark and þat as swithe
And þis Chanoun him þankid ofte siþe
And took his leue and wente forþ his wey
And atte þridde day brought his money / 1033
And to þe prest he took þis gold agayn
wher-of þis prest was wonder glad and fayn

Certes quod he no þing' annoyeþ me
To lene a man a noble or tuo or þre/ 1037
Or what' þing/ were in my possessioun
whan he so trewe is of' condicioun
That' in no wise he breke wol his day
To such a man I can neuer say nay 1041
what' quod þis chanoun schold I be vntrewe?
Nay þat' were þing' I-fallen of' þe newe /
Trouþe is a þing' þat' I wol euer kepe /
Vnto þat' day in which þat' I schal crepe 1045
In to my graue and elles god forbede /
Bilieueth þis as siker as ȝour crede /
God þank' I and in good tyme be it' sayd
That' þer was neuer man ȝet' euel a-payd 1049
For gold ne siluer þat' he to me lent
Ne neuer falshed in myn hert' I ment
And sire quod he now of' my priuete
Syn ȝe so goodlich haue be vnto me 1053
And kyþed to me so gret' gentilesce
Som-what' to quyte wiþ ȝoure kyndenesse
I wil ȝow schewe and if' ȝow lust/ to lere [leaf 176]
[[1]I wil ȝow teche pleynly the manere[1]] [[1]—[1] In a later hand.] 1057
how I kan werken in philosophie
Takith good heed. ȝe schul seen wel at' ye
That' I wol doon a maystry er I go
ȝe quod þe prest'. ȝe sire and wol ȝe so 1061
Mary þer of' I pray ȝow hertily
At' ȝoure comaundement' sire trewely
Quod þe chanoun and elles god forbede
Lo how þis þeef' couþe his seruise beede / 1065
Ful soth it is þat' such profred seruise
Stynkeþ as witnessen þese olde wise
And þat' ful soone I wol it verefye /
In þis chanoun roote of' al treccherie 1069
That' euermor delit' haþ and gladnesse /
Such feendly þoughtes in his hert' empresse

How cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe
God kepe vs from his fals dissimilynge / 1073
what wiste þis prest/ wiþ whom þat he delte
Ne of his harm comyng he no þing felte
O seely prest. o sely Innocent /
wiþ coueytise anoon þou schalt be blent/ 1077
O graceles ful blynd is þy conceyt
No þing art þou war of þe deceyt
which þat þis fox I-schapen haþ to þe
his wily wrenches y-wis þou maist not fle 1081
wherfor to go to þe conclusioun
That referreth to þy confusioun
Vnhappy man anoon I wil me hie /
To tellen þin vnwitte and þy folye / 1085
And eek þe falsnesse of þat oþer wrecche /
Als ferforþ as my connyng wol strecche /
This Chanoun was my lord ȝe wolde weene
Sire ost in faith and by þe heuen queene / 1089
It was anoþer chanoun and not he
That can an hundred fold more subtilte
he hath bitrayed folkes many tyme /
Of his falnes it dullith me to ryme 1093
Euer when I speke of his falshede / [*leaf* 176, *ba-k*]
For schame of him my cheekes wexen reede/
Algates þay bygynne for to glowe /
For reednes haue I noon riȝt/ wel I knowe / 1097
In my visage for fumes diuerse
Of metals which ȝe han me herd reherse
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse
Now tak heed of þis chanouns cursednesse / 1101
Sir quod he to þe prest let ȝour man goon
For quyk siluer þat/ we it hadde anoon
And let him bringe ounces tuo or thre /
And whan he comeþ as faste schul ȝe see / 1105
A wonder þing which ȝe saugh neuer er þis
Sire quod þe prest it schal be doon I-wis

He bad his *ser*uaunt' fecche him his þinges
And he al redy wax at his biddynges 1109
And went' him forth and com anoon agayn
wiþ þis quyk' siluer schortly for to sayn /
And took' þese ounces þre to þe chano*un*
And he it layde faire and wel a do*un* 1113
And bad þe *ser*uaunt' coles for to bringe
That/ he anoon might' go to his werkynge
The coles right' anoon weren I-fett'
And þis chanoun took' out a croselett' 1117
Out' of' his bosom and schewed it þe prest
This instrument quod he which þat þou sest
Tak' in þin hond and put þiself' þer Inne /
Of' þis quyksiluer an vnce and her bygynne 1121
In þe name of' crist to wax a philosophre /
Ther ben ful fewe whiche þat' I wol profre
To schewe hem þus moche of' my science
For ȝe schul seen heer by exp*er*ience 1125
That' þis quiksiluer I wol mortifye
Right' in ȝoure sight' anoon wiþouten lye /
And make it as good siluer and as fyn
As þer is any in ȝoure purs or myn 1129
Or elles wher and make it malleable /
And elles holdeth. me fals and vnable /
Amonges folk' for euer to appeere / [*leaf* 177]
I haue a pouder heer þat' cost' me deere 1133
Schal make al good for it is cause of' al
My connyng' which þat' I ȝou schewe schal
Voydith ȝoure man and let' him be þer oute
And schet' þe dore whils we ben aboute 1137
Oure priuetee þat no man vs aspye /
whiles we werken in þis philosophie /
Al as he bad fulfilled was in dede /
This ilke *ser*uaunt' anoon right' out ȝede / 1141
And his maister schitte þe dore anoon
And to here labour speedily þai goon

This prest/ at' þis cursed chanou*n*s biddyng'
Vppon þe fuyr anoon sette þis þing' 1145
And blew þe fuyr and busied him ful fast/
And þis chanoun in to þe croslet' cast'
A pouder noot' I wher-of' þat' it was
I-maad ouþer of' chalk' ouþer of' glas 1149
Or som what' elles was nouȝt' worþ a flye
To blynde wiþ þis prest' and bad him hye
These coles for to couchen al aboue:
The croislet/. for in tokenyng' I þe loue 1153
Quod þis chanoun þin oughne handes tuo
Schal wirche al þing' which þat schal be do
Graunt' mercy quod þe prest' and was ful glad
And couchede coles as þe chanoun bad 1157
And whil he besy was. þis feendly wrecche
This false chanoun þe foule feend him fecche
Out' of' his bosom took' a bechen cole
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole / 1161
And þer-In put' was of' siluer lymayle /
And vnce and stopped was wiþoute fayle
This hole with wex to kepe þe lymail In /
And vnderstondith þat þis false gyn 1165
was not' maad þer but' it' was maad bifore
And oþer þinges I schal telle more /
Her afterward which þat' he with him brought'
Er he com þere to bigyle him he þought / 1169
And so he dede er þay wente atwynne [*leaf* 177, *back*]
Til he had torned him couþe he nought blynne /
It' dulleþ me whan þat' I of' him speke /
On his falshede fayn wold I me wreke / 1173
If' I wist' how but' he is heer and þere
he is so variant' he byt' no where /
But' takeþ heed now sires for goddes loue
He took' his cole of' which I spak' aboue / 1177
And in his hond he bar it priuely
And whiles þe preste couched bysily

The coles as I tolde ȝow er þis
This chanoun sayde freend ȝe doon amys 1181
This is not' couched as it oughte be
But' soone I schal amenden it quod he /
Now let' me melle þer with but a while /
For of' ȝow haue I pitee by seint' Gile 1185
ȝe been right' hoot / I se wel how ȝe swete
haue heer a cloþ and wype a-way þe wete
And whiles þat þis prest' him wyped haas
This chanoun took' his cole I schrewe his faas 1189
And layd it abouen on þe mydward
Of' þe croslet/ and blew wel afterward
Til þat' þe coles gonne faste brenne
Now ȝeue vs drinke quod þe chanoun penne / 1193
Als swiþe al schal be wel I vndertake
Sitte we doun and let' vs mery make /
And whan þe chanouns bechene cole /
was brent' al þe lymail out' of' þe hole 1197
In to þe crosselet' anoon fel a doun
And so it moste needes by resoun
Sins it so euen aboue couched was
But' þer of' wist' þe prest' no þing' allas 1201
He demed alle þe colis I-liche goode
For of' þe sleight' he no þing' vnderstood
And whan þis alcamister saugh̄ his tyme
Rys vp sire prest' quod he and stonde byme 1205
And fo I wot' wel Ingot' haue ȝe noon
Goth walkith forth and brynge a chalkstoon
For I wol make it of' þe same schap [leaf 178]
That' is an Ingold if' I may haue hap / 1209
And bringe with ȝou a bolle or a panne
Ful of' water and ȝe schul wel se þanne /
how þat' oure besynes schal happe and preue
And ȝit for ȝe schul haue no mysbileeue 1213
Ne wrong' conceyt' of' me in ȝoure absence
I ne wol nough̄t' ben out' of' ȝoure presence /

But go with ȝou and come wiþ ȝou agayn
The chambur dore schortly for to sayn 1217
Thay opened and schette and wente forþ here weye
And forth with hem þey caryed þe keye /
And comen agayn wiþouten eny delay /
what' schuld I tary al þe longe day 1221
he took' þe chalk/ and schop it in þe wise /
Of' an Ingot' as I schal ȝow deuyse /
I say he took' out' of' his oughne sleeue
A teyne of siluer euel mot' he cheeue 1225
which þat' was but' an vnce of' wight'
And takeþ heed now of' his cursed slight'
he schop his Ingot/ in lengþe and in brede /
Of' þis teyne wiþouten eny drede 1229
So sleighly þat' þe prest' it nought' aspyde
And in his sleeue agayn he gan it hyde /
And fro þe fuyr he took' vp his mateere /
And in to þe Ingot' put' it' with mery cheere / 1233
And in to þe watir vessel he it cast'
whan þat' him list and bad þis prest as fast'
Loke what' þer is put in þin hond and grope
Thou fynde þer siluer schalt' as I hope / 1237
what' deuel of' helle schold it elles be /
Schauyng' of' siluer siluer is par de
He putte in his hond and tok' vp a teyne
Of' siluer fyn and glad in euery veyne: 1241
was þis prest' whan he saugh it was so
Goddes blessyng' and his modres also
And alle halwes haue ȝe sire chanoun
Seyde þe prest' and I her malisoun 1245
But' and ȝe vouche sauf' to teche me [leaf 178, back]
This nobil craft' and þis subtilite
I wil be ȝoure in al þat' euer I may
Quod þis chanoun ȝet' wol I make assay 1249
The secound tyme þat' ȝe mow taken heede
And ben expert' of' þis and in ȝour neede

Anoþer day ȝour self' in myn absence
This discipline and þis crafty science 1253
Let' take another vnce quod he þo
Of' quyksiluer wiþouten wordes mo
And do þer with as ȝe haue doon er þis
wiþ þat' oþer which now siluer is 1257
The prest' him busyeth in al þat' he can
To doon as þis chanoun þis cursed man
Comaunded him and faste blew þe fuyr
For to come to theffect' of' his desyr 1261
And þis chanoun right' in þe mene while
Al redy was þis prest' eft' to bygile
And for a countenaunce in his hond bar
An holow stikke tak keep and be war 1265
In þende of' which an vnce and no more
Of' siluer lymail put' was as bifore
was in his cole and stopped wiþ wex wel
For to kepe in his limail euery del 1269
And whil þe prest/ was in his besynesse
This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse /
To him anoon and his pouder cast' In
As he dede er þe deuel out' of' his skyn 1273
him torne I pray to god for his falshede
For he was euer fals in oth and deede
And wiþ þis stikke alone þe croslet'
That' was ordeyned wiþ þat' false get' 1277
He styred þe coles til relente gan
The wex agayn þe fuyr as euery man
But/ it a fool be woot' wel it' moot' nede /
And al þat' in þe hole was out ȝede / 1281
And in to þe creslet' hastily it' fel
[1 Now good sires what' wol ȝe bet þen wel? [1—1 *In a later hand.*]
whan þat' þis prest thus was begiled a-gayn,1]
Supposyng' not' but' trouþe soþ to sayn [*leaf* 179] 1285
he was so glad þat' I can nought/ expresse /
In no maner his myrþe and his gladnesse

And to þe chanoun he profred eft soone
Body and good ȝe quod þe chanoun soone / 1289
Though pore I be crafty þou schalt me fynde /
I warne þe ȝet is þer more byhynde
Is þer any coper her Inne quod he
ȝe sir quod þis prest I trowe þer be 1293
Elles go bye som and þat as swithe
Now goode sire go forth þy way and hythe
he went/ his way and with þis coper cam
And þis chanoun it in his hondes nam 1297
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce
Al to simple is my tongue to pronounce
The minister and of his witt þe doublenesse /
Of þis chanoun roote of cursednesse 1301
he semed frendly to hem þat knew him nought
But he was fendly boþe in werk and þought
It werieþ me to telle of his falsnesse /
And naþeles ȝit wol I it expresse 1305
To þat entent men may be war þer by
And for noon oþer cause trewely /
he put þis vnce of coper in þe croslet
And on þe fuyr als swithe he haþ it set 1309
And cast in pouder and made þe prest/ to blowe
And in his worching for to stoupe lowe
As he dede er and al nas but a iape
Right as him list þe prest he made his ape / 1313
And afterward in þe Ingot he it cast
And in þe panne putte it atte last/
Of water and in he put his owne hond
And in his sleeue as ȝe byforenhond 1317
herde me telle he had a siluer teyne
he sleyghly took it out þis cursed heyne
Vnwitynge þis prest of his false craft/
And in þe pannes botme he haþ it laft 1321
And in þe water rumbleþ to and fro
And wonder priuely took vp also [*leaf* 179, *back*]

The coper teyne nought knowyng' þis prest'
And hidde it and hent' him by þe brest/ 1325
And to him spak' and þus sayde in his game
Stoupeth a-doun by god ȝe ben to blame
helpeþ me now as I dede ȝow whil er
Put' in ȝour hond and loke what is þer 1329
This prest' took' vp þis siluer teyne anoon
And þanne sayde þe chanoun let vs goon
wiþ þese þre teynes whiche þat' we han wrought'
To som goldsmyth and wite if' it be ought' 1333
For by my faith I nolde for myn hood
But' if' þey were siluer fyn and good
And þat' as swiþe proued schal it be
Vnto þe goldsmith wiþ þese teynes þre 1337
Thay went' and putte þese teynes in assay
To fuyr and hamer might' no man say nay
But' þay were as hem oughte be
This sotted prest' who was gladder þan he // 1341
was neuer brid gladder agayn þe day
Ne nightyngale in þe sesoun of' may
was neuer noon þat' liste better to synge /
Ne lady lustier in carolynge 1345
And for to speke of' loue and wommanhede
Ne knyght' in armes doon an hardy deede/
To stonde in grace of' his lady deere
Than hadde þis prest' þis craft' for to lere 1349
And to þe chanoun thus he spak' and seyde
For þe loue of' god þat' for vs deyde
And as I may deserue it vnto ȝow
what' schal þis receyt' coste telleþ now 1353
By oure lady quod þe chanoun it is deere
I warne ȝow wel for sire I and a freere
In Engelond þer can man it make /
No fors quoþ he now sire for goddes sake / 1357
what' schal I paye telleþ me I pray
I-wis quod he it is ful dere I say

Sire at' a word if' þat ȝe lust' it haue
ȝe schul pay fourty pound so god me saue / [leaf 180] 1361
And nere þe frendschipe þat ȝe dede er þis
To me. ȝe schulde paye more I-wys
This prest' þe somme of' fourty pound anoon)
Of' nobles fette and took hem euerychoon) 1365
To þis chanoun for þis ilk' receyt'
Al his werkyng' nas but' fraude and deceyt/
Sire prest' he seyde I kepe haue no loos
Of' my craft' for I wold it kept' were cloos 1369
And as ȝe loueth me kepeþ it secre
For and men knewe / al my sotilte
By god men wolden haue so gret' enuye
To me by cause of' my philosophie 1373
I schulde be deed þer were noon oþer weye
God it forbede quoþ þe prest' what' seye
ȝet' had I leuer spenden al þe good
which þat' I haue and elles wax I wood 1377
Than þat ȝe schulde falle in such meschief'
For ȝour good wil sir haue ȝe right' good preef'
Quoþ þe chanoun · and far wel graunt mercy
he went' his way and neuer þe prest' him sey 1381
After þis day and whan þat þis prest' scholde /
Maken assay at such tyme as he wolde /
Of' þis receyt' far wel it wold not' be /
lo þus byiaped and bygilt' was he 1385
Thus makeþ he his introduction
To bringe folk' to here destruccioun
Considereth sires how þat in ech astaat'
Bitwixe men and gold þer is debaat 1389
So ferforth þat' vnneþe þer is noon
This multiplying' blent' so many oon
That' in good faith I trowe þat it be /
The cause grettest' of' which skarsete 1393
Philosophres speken so mistyly
In þis craft' þat' men conne not' come þer by

For any witt þat' men han now on dayes
They may wel chiteren as doon þese iayes 1397
And in here termes sette lust' and peyne
But' to her *pur*pos schul þay neuer atteyne [*leaf* 180, *back*]
A man may lightly lerne if' he haue ought
To multiplie and bringe his good to nought 1401
Lo such a lucre is in þis lusty game/
A mannes mirþe it wol torne in to grame /
And empte also grete and heuy purses
And make folk' to purchace curses 1405
Of' hem þat' han her good þer-to I-lent
O fy for schame þay þat' haue be brent
Allas can þay not fle þe fuyres hete
ȝe þat' it vsen I rede ȝe it lete 1409
lest' ȝe lesen al for bet' þan neuer is late
Neuer to þriue were to long' a date /
Though ȝe prolle ay ȝe schul it neuer fynde
ȝe ben as bolde as is bayard þe blynde 1413
That' blundreþ forþ and peril casteth noon
he is as bold to renne a-gayn a stoon
As for to go bysides in þe wey /
So fare ȝe þat' multiplie I sey 1417
If' þat' ȝoure yȝen can nought' seen aright'
loke þat' ȝoure mynde lakke nought' his sight'
For þough ȝe loke neuer so brode and stare /
ȝe schul nought' wynne vpon þat' chaffare / 1421
But' wasten al þat' þay may rape and renne
wiþdrawe þe fuyr lest' it so faste brenne
Medleþ no more wiþ þat art' I mene /
For ȝif' ȝe doon ȝoure þrift' is goon ful clene 1425
And right' as swithe I wol ȝow telle heere
what' þat' þe philosophres sein in þis mateere /
¶ lo þus saiþ arnold of' þe newe to*un*
As his Rosarie maketh mencioun 1429
He saith right' þus wiþouten eny lye
Ther may no man mercury mortifye

But hit be with his broþer knowleching
how þat he which þat first sayd þis þing 1433
Of philosophres fader was hermes
he saiþ how þe dragoun douteles
he dyeþ nought but if þat he be slayn
wiþ his broþer and þat is for to sayn [*leaf* 181] 1437
By þe dragoun mercury and noon oþer
he vnderstood and brimstoon be his broþer
That out of sol and luna were I-drawe
And þerfore sayde he take heed to my sawe / 1441
Let no man besy him þis art to seche /
But þat he thentencioun and speche /
Of philosophres vnderstonde can
And if he do he is a lewed man 1445
For þis sciens and þis connyng quod he
Is of þe secre of secretz *par de*
Also þer was a disciple of plato
That on a tyme sayde his maister to 1449
As his book somer wil bere witnesse
And þis was his demaunde in sothfastnesse /
Tel me þe name of þe priue stoon
And plato answered vnto him anoon 1453
Take þe stoon þat titanos men name /
which is þat quod he magnasia is þe same
Sayde plato ȝe sire and is it þus
This ignotus per ignotius 1457
what is magnasia good sir I ȝou pray
It is a water þat is maad I say
Of elementes foure quod plato
Telle me þe rooche good sire quod he þo 1461
Of þat water if it be ȝour wille
Nay nay quod plato certeyn þat I nylle
The philosophres sworn were euerich oon
That thay scholde discouere it vnto man noon 1465
Ne in no book it write in no manere /
For vnto crist it is so leef and deere

That' he wil not þat' it discouered be /
But' wher it likeþ to his deite / 1469
Man to enspire and eek' for to defende
whom þat' him likeþ lo þis is þe ende
Than conclude I þus syn god of' heuene /
Ne wol not' þat' þe philosophres neuene / 1473
how þat' a man schal come vnto þis stoon
I rede as for þe beste let' it goon [*leaf* 181, *back*]
For who-so makeþ god his aduersarie
As for to werke eny þing' in contrarie 1477
Vnto his wil certes neuer schal he þriue
Though þat' he multiplie terme of' al his lyue
And þer a poynt' for ended is my tale
God send euery trewe man boote of' his bale / 1481
¶ Here endeth þe chanouns ȝeman his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP C. FRAGMENT IV.

§ 1. THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Doctor of of phisik

There was as telleþ Thitus lyuius 1
A knight þat cleped was virginieus
Fulfild of honours and of worþines
And strong of frendes and of gret riches 4
A doughter he hadde by his wyf
And neuer ne hadde he mo in al his lyf
Fair was þis mayde in excellent beaute
Aboue eu*er*y wight that men may se 8
For nature haþ wiþ souereyn diligence
I-formed hir in so gret excellence
As þough sche wolde say lo I nature
þus can I forme and peynte a creature 12
whan þat/ me lust who can me counterfete
Pigmalion nouȝt þoughh he alwey forge and bete /
Or graue or peynte for I dar wel sayn
appollus ȝepherus schulde wirche in vayn 16
To graue or paynte or forge & bete
If þay presumed me to counterfete
For he þat is þe former principal
haþ maad me his viker general 20
To forme and peynte erþely creature
Right as me lust al þing is in my cure
Vnder þe moone þat may wane and waxe
And for my werke noþing wol I axe 24

My lord and I ben fully at' accord
I made hir to þe worschip of' my lord
So do I alle myn oþer creatures
what' colour þat' þay been or what' figures / 28
Thus semeþ me þat' nature wolde say
This mayde was of' age twelf' ȝer and tway [*leaf* 182]
In which þat' nature haþ suche delite
For right' as sche can peynte a lili white 32
And rody a rose right' with such peynture
Sche peynted haþ þis noble creature
Er sche was born vpon her limes fre
were als bright' as such colour schulde be 36
And phebus deyed hadde hire tresses grete
I-lyk' to þe stremes of' his borned hete
And if' þat' excellent' was hir beaute
A þousand fold more vertuous was sche 40
And hire ne lakkeþ no condicio*un*
That' is to preyse as by discrecio*un*
As wel in body as goost' chaste was sche
For which sche floured in virginite 44
with alle humilite and abstinence
with alle attemp*er*aunce and pacience
with mesure eek' and beryng' of' array
Discret' sche was in answeryng' alway 48
Though sche were wis pallas dar I sayn
hir facound eek' ful wo*m*manly and playn
Noon countrefeted termes hadde sche
To seme wys but' after hir degre 52
Sche spak' and alle hire wordes more and lesse
Sovnyng' in vertu and in gentilesse
Schamefast' sche was in maydenes schamfastnesse
Constant' in hert'. and euer in besynesse 56
To dryue hire out' of' hir slogardye
Bachus had of' hir mouþ no maistrye
For wille and þought' doon venus encrece
As men in fuyr wil caste oyle or grece 60

And of' hir oughne vertu vnconstreigned
Sche haþ ful ofte tyme hire seek' y-feyned
For þat' sche wolde fleen þe companye
wher likly was to treten of' folye 64
As is at' festes reueles and at daunces
That' ben occasiouns of' daliaunces
Such þinges maken children for to be /
To soone rype and bold. as men may se / [*leaf* 182, *back*] 68
which is ful perilous and haþ ben ȝore
For al to soone may sche lerne lore
Of' boldenesse whan sche is a wyf'
And ȝe maystresses in ȝoure olde lyf' 72
That' lordes doughtres han in gouernaunce
Ne takeþ of' my word no displesaunce /
Thinges þat ben set' in gouernynges
Of' lordes douȝtres oonly for tuo þinges / 76
Ouþer for ȝe han kept' ȝour honeste
Oþer elles for ȝe han falle in frelete
And knowe wel y-nough þe olde daunce
And conne forsake fully meschaunce 80
For euermo þerfore for cristes sake /
kepeþ wel þo þat' ȝe vndertake
A p[illegible]f' of' venesoun þat' haþ forlaft'
[illegible]licorousnesse and al his theues craft' 84
Can kepe a forest' best' of' eny man
Now kepe hir wel for and ȝe wil ȝe can
loke wel to no vice ȝe assent'
lest' ȝe be dampned for ȝour wikked entent 88
For who-so doþ a traytour is certayn
And takeþ keep of' þat' þat' sche schal sayn
Of' al tresoun souereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight' bytrayeth Innocence 92
ȝe fadres and ȝe modres eek' also
Though ȝe han children be it' oon or mo
ȝoure is þe charge of' al her sufferaunce
whiles þay be vnder ȝour gouernaunce / 96

Beth war þat' by ensample of' ȝoure lyuynge
Ouþer by necgligence in chastisynge
That' þay ne perische for I dar wel seye
If' þat' þay doon ȝe schul ful sore abeye 100
vnder a schepherd softe and necligent'
The wolf' haþ many a schep and lamb torent'
Sufficeþ oon ensample now as here
For I moot' turne aȝein to my matiere 104
This mayde of' which I telle my tale expresse
So kept' hir self' hir neded no maystresse [leaf 183]
For in hir lyuyng' maydens mighte rede
As in a book' euery good word and dede / 108
That' longeþ vnto a mayden vertuous
Sche was so prudent' and so bounteous
For þe which out' sprong' on euery syde /
Boþe of' hir beaute and bounte wyde 112
That' þurgh þe lond þay praysed hir ilkoone /
That' louede vertu saue enuye alloone /
That' sory is of' oþer mennes wele /
And glad is of' his sorwe and vnhele 116
The doctor made þis descripcio*un*
This mayde wente vpon a day in to þe toun
Toward þe temple with hir moder deere
As is of' ȝonge maydenes þe manere 120
Now was þer a Iustice in þe toun
That' gouernour was of' þat Regio*un*
And so bifel þis Iuge his eyȝen cast'
Vpon þis mayde auysing' hir ful fast' 124
As sche cam forby þer þe Iuge stood
Anoon his herte chaunged and his mood
So was he caught' wiþ beaute of' þis mayde
And to himself' ful priuely he sayde 128
This mayde schal be my*n* for any man
Anoon þe feend in to his herte ran
And taughte him sodeinly by what' slighte
This mayde to his purpos wynne he mighte / 132

For certes by no fors ne by no meede
him þoughtᵗ he was notᵗ able for to speede /
For sche was strongᵗ ofᵗ frendes and eekᵗ sche
Conformed was in such souerayn bounte 136
Thatᵗ wel he wistᵗ he mightᵗ hir neuer wynne
As for to make hir with hir body synne
For which wiþ gretᵗ deliberacio*u*n
he sent after a clerkᵗ was in þe toun 140
The which he knew for subtil and for bold
This Iuge vnto þe clerkᵗ his tale haþ told
In secre wyse and made him to assure
He schulde telle it to no creature [*leaf* 183, *back*] 144
And ifᵗ he dede he schulde lese his heed
whan þ*at*ᵗ assented was þis cursed reed
Glad was the Iuge and made glad cheere /
And ȝafᵗ him ȝiftes precious and deere / 148
whan schapen was al þis conspiracye /
Fro poyntᵗ to poyntᵗ how þat his lecherie
Parformed scholde be ful subtilly
As ȝe schul here afterward openly / 152
hom goþ þis clerkᵗ þatᵗ highte Claudius
This false Iuge þatᵗ highte apius
So was his name for it is no fable
But knowen for a storial þingᵗ notable 156
The sentence ofᵗ hitᵗ soþ is out ofᵗ doute
This false iugge goþ now fastᵗ aboute /
To hasten his delitᵗ al þatᵗ he may /
And so bifel soone after on a day 160
This false Iuge as telleþ vs þe story
As he was wont satᵗ in his consistory
And ȝafᵗ his domes vpon sondry caas
This false clerkᵗ com forth a ful good paas 164
And saide lord ifᵗ þat it be ȝour wille
As doþ me rightᵗ vpon þis pitous bille
In which I pleyne vpon virgilius
And ifᵗ he wile seyn it is nouȝtᵗ þus 168

I wil proue hit and fynde good witnesse
That soþ is þat my bulle wol expresse /
The Iuge answerd of' þis in his absence
I may not' ȝiue diffinityf' sentence 172
let' do him calle and I wol gladly hiere
Thou schalt' haue alle rigħt' and no wrong' heere
Virginius com to wite þe Iugges wille /
And right' anoon was red þis cursed bille 176
The sentence of' hit was as ȝe schul heere
¶ To ȝow my lord sire apius so deere
Scheweþ ȝoure pore seruaunt' Claudius
how þat' a knight' called Virginius 180
Aȝeins þe lawe aȝens alle equyte /
holdeth expresse aȝeinst þe wille of' me [leaf 184]
My seruaunt' which þat' my thral is by right
which fro myn hous was stolen on a nigħt 184
whiles sche was ful ȝong' þat wol I preue
By witnesse lord so þat' ȝe ȝow not' greue
Sche is nought his douȝter what' so he say
wherfore to ȝow my lord þe Iugge I pray 188
Ȝelde me my þraħ if' þat it be ȝour wille
lo þis was al þe sentence of' þe bille
Virgineus gan vpon þe clerk' byholde
But' hastily er he his tale tolde 192
he wolde haue proued it as schold a knigħt'
And eek' by witnessyng' of' many a wigħt'
That' al was fals þat' sayde his aduersarie
This cursed Iuge wold no lenger tarye / 196
Ne heere a word more of' virgineus
But' ȝaf' his Iugement' and saide þus
I deme anoon þis clerk' his seruaunt' haue
Thou schalt' no lenger in þin hous hir haue 200
Go bringe hir forþ and put hir in oure warde
This clerk' schal haue his thral thus I a-warde
And whan þis worþy knigħt virgineus
Thurgh þassent' of' þis Iuge apius 204

Moste by force his deere douȝter ȝiuen
Vnto þe Iuge in lecchery to lyuen
he goþ him hom and sette him in his halle /
And leet' anoon his deere douȝter calle / 208
And wiþ a face deed as aisshen colde
vpon hir humble face he gan byholde
with fadres pite stiking' þorugh his herte
Al wolde he from his p*ur*pos not conuerte / 212
Doughter quod he v*ir*ginea by þy name
Ther ben tuo weyes eyþer deþ or schame
That' þou most' suffre allas þat I was bore
For neuer þou deseruedest' wherfore 216
To deyen with a swerd or with a knyf'
O deere doughter ender of' my lif'
which I haue fostred vp with such plesaunce
That' þou nere oute of' my remembraunce [*leaf* 184, *back*] 220
O doughter which. þat art my laste wo
And in þis lif' my laste ioye also
O gemme of' chastite in pacience
Tak' þou þy deth for þis is my sentence 224
For loue and not' for hate þou most' be deed
My pitous hond mot' smyten of' þin heed
Allas þat' euer apius þe say
Thus haþ he falsly iugged þe to day 228
And told hir al þe caas as ȝe bifore
han herd. it nedeth noughtt' to telle it more
Mercy deere fader quod þis mayde
And with þat' word sche boþe hir armes layde / 232
Aboute his nekke as sche was wont to doo
The teeres brast' out' of' hir eyȝen tuo
And sayde goode fader schal I dye
Is ther no grace is þer no remedye 236
No certeyn deere doughter myn quod he /
Than ȝeue me leue fader myn quod sche /
My deþ for to compleyne a litel space /
For par dy Ieffa ȝaf' his douȝter grace 240

For to compleyne er he hir slough allas
And God it woot' no þing' was hir trespas
But' þat' sche ran hir fader first/ to se
To welcome him with gret' solempnite 244
And with þat' word a swoun sche fel anoon /
And after whan hir swownyng' was agoon
Sche riseþ vp and to hir fader sayde /
Blessed be god þat' I schal deye a mayde / 248
ȝeue me my deth er þat' I haue a schame
Do with ȝour child ȝour wille a goddes name
And with þat' word sche prayed him ful ofte
That' wiþ his swerd he schulde smyte hir softe 252
And wiþ þat' word on swoune doun sche fel
hir fader with ful sorwful hert' and fel
hir heed of' smoot' and by þe top it hente
And to þe Iuge bigan it' to presente 256
As he sat' in his doom in concistory
whan the Iuge it say as saiþ the story [*leaf* 185]
he bad take him and honge him faste
But' right' anoon alle þe poeple in þraste / 260
To saue þe knight' for rouþe and for pite
For knowen was þe fals iniquite /
The poeple anoon had suspect' in þis þing'
By moner of' þis clerkes chalengyng' 264
That' it was by thassent' of' apius
That' wiste wel þat' he was leccherous
For which vnto þis Apius þay goon
And casten him in prisoun right' anoon 268
wher as he slough himself' and Claudius
That' servaunt' was vnto þis Apius
was demed for to honge vpon a tree
But' virgineus of' his grete pite 272
Prayde for him þat' he was exiled
And elles certes he had ben bigiled
The remenaunt' were anhanged more and lesse /
That' were consented to þis cursednesse / 276

Her may men se how synne hath his merite
Be war for no man woot' how god wol smyte /
In no degre ne in which maner wise
The worm of' conscience wol arise 280
Of' wicked lyf' þough it so pryue be
That' no man woot' of' it but' god and he
wher þat' he be lewed man or lered
He not' how soone þat' he may be afered 284
Therfore I rede ȝow this counseil take
Forsakith synne / er synne yow forsake
¶ Here endeth þe Doctor of' phisiq*ue* his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And here bygynneth þe p*r*ologe of the P*ar*doner /

Owre ost gan swere as he were wood
harrow quod he by nayles and by blood 288
This was a cursed þef a fals Iustice
As schendful deþ as herte can deuise
So falle vpon his body and his boones
The deuel I bykenne him al at oones 292
Allas to deere boughte sche hir beaute
wherfore I say þat alle men may se [*leaf* 185, *back*]
That ȝiftes of fortune or of nature /
Ben cause of deth of many a creature / 296
hir beaute was hir deþ I dar wel sayn
Allas so pitously as he was slayn
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 300
But trewely myn owne maister deere
This was a pitous tale for to heere
But naþeles pas ouer þis is no fors
I pray to god to saue þi gentil corps 304
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And euery boist ful of þi letuarie
God blesse hem and oure lady seinte marie / 308
So mot I þen þou art a propre man
And y-lik a p*r*elat by seint Runyan
Sayde I wel can I not speke in terme
But wel I woot þou dost myn herte erme 312
I haue almost y-caught a cardiacle
By corpus boones but I haue triacle
Oþer elles a draught of moyst and corny ale
Oþer but/ I hiere anoon a mery tale 316

Myn hert' is brost'. for pite of' þat' mayde
Thow p*ar*doner þou belamy he sayde /
Tel vs a tale for þou canst' many oon
It' schal be doon quod he and þat' anoon 320
But' first' quod he her at' þis ale stake /
I wil first' drynke and byt' on a cake
But' rig̃ht' anoon þe gentils gan to crie
Nay let him tellen vs no ribaudye 324
Tel vs som moral þing' þat' we may leere /
Gladly quod he and sayde as ȝe schal heere
But' in þe cuppe wil I me beþinke
vpon some honest' tale whil I drinke / 328

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat

LOrdyngs q*uo*d he in chirche whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an hauteyn speche /
And ryng' it out as lowd as doþ a belle
For I can al by rote þat' I telle 332
My teeme is alway oon and euer was
Radix om*nium* malor*um* est' Cupiditas
First' I pronounce whennes þat' I come
And þanne my bulles schewe I alle and some [*leaf* 186] 336
Oure liege lordes seal vpon my patent'
That' schewe I first' my body to warent/
That' no man be so hardy prest' ne clerk'
Me to destourbe of' cristes holy werk' 340
And after þat' þan tel I forth my tales
Bulles of' popes and of' Cardynales /
Of' patriarkes and of' bisshops I schewe
And in latyn speke I wordes fewe / 344
To sauore with my predicacio*un*
And for to stere hem to deuocio*un*
Thanne schewe I forth my longe cristal stoones
I-crammed ful of' cloutes and of' boones 348
Reliks þay ben as wene þei echoon
Than haue I in lato*un* a schulder boon
which þat' was of' an holy Iewes scheep
Good men say I tak' of' my wordes keep 352
If' þat' þis boon be waische in eny welle /
If' cow or calf' or scheep or oxe swelle
That' eny worm haþ ete or worm I-stonge
Tak' water of' þat' welle and waisch his tonge 356

And it is hool anoon and forþer-more
Of' pokkes and of' scabbe and eu*er*y sore /
Schal eu*er*y scheep be hool þat' of' þis welle
That' drynketh a draught' tak' heed eek' what' I telle 360
If' þat' þe goode man þat' þe beest' oweþ
wol euery wike er þat' þe cok' him croweþ
Fastynge drynke / of' þis welle a draught'
As þilke holy Iew oure eldres taught' 364
His beestes and his stoor schal multiplie
And sires also it kelith Ialousie
For þough a man be ful in ialous rage
let' make wiþ þis water his potage 368
And neuer schal he more his wyf' mys trist
þough he þe soþ of' hir defaute wist'
Al hadde sche take prestes tuo or þre
her is a meteyn eek' þat' ȝe may see 372
he þat' his honde put' in þis metayn
he schal haue multiplying' of' grayn [*leaf* 186, *back*]
whan he haþ sowen . be it whete or otes
So þat' ȝe offre pans or elles grootes 376
And men and wo*m*men oon þing' warne I ȝow
If' eny wight' be in þis chirche now
That' haþ doon synne orrible þat he
Dar nought' for schame of' it schryuen be 380
Or ony wo*m*man be sche ȝong' or old
That' hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold
which folk' schal haue no power ne grace
To offre to my relikes in þis place 384
And who so fint' him out' of' suche blame
Thay wol come vp and offre in goddes name
And I assoile hem by þe auctorite
which þat' by bulle . was I-graunted me 388
By þis gaude haue I wonne euery ȝeer
An hundred mark' syn I was p*ar*doner
I stonde lik' a clerk' in my pulpit
And whan þe lewed poeple is doun I-set' 392

I preche so as ȝe haue herd bifore
And telle hem an hondred Iapes more
Than peyne I me to strecche forþ my necke
And est and west vpon þe poeple I bekke 396
As doþ a dowfe syttyng' on a berne
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so ȝerne
That' it is ioye to se my busynesse
Of' auarice and of' such cursednesse 400
Is al my preching' for to make hem fre
To ȝeue here pans and namely vnto me
For myn entent' is nought' but' for to wynne
And no þing' for correccio*u*n of' synne 404
I rekke neuer. when þay ben I-beryed
Though þat' here soules gone a blakeberyed
For certes many a p*re*dicacio*u*n
Comeþ ofte tyme of' euel entencio*u*n 408
Som for plesauns of' folk' and flaterie
To ben auaunced by ypocrisie
And som for veine gloir and som for hate
For whan I dar not' oþer weys debate [*leaf* 187] 412
Than wil I stynge him with my tonge smerte
In preching' so þat he schal not' astert'
To be diffamed falsly if' þat' he
haþ trespast' to my breþeren or to me 416
For þough I telle not' his p*ro*pre name
Men schal wel knowe þat it is þe same /
By signes and by oþer circumstaunces
Thus quyt' I folk' þat' doon vs displesaunces 420
Thus put' I out' my venym vnder hiewe
Of' holynes. to seme holy and trewe /
But schortly myn entent I wol deuyse
I preche no þing' but' of' coueityse 424
Therfor my teem is ȝit' and euer was
Radix om*nium*. malor*um* est' Cupiditas
Thus can I preche agayn þe same vice
which þat' I vse and þat' is auarice 428

But' though my self' be gulty in þe synne
ȝit can I make oþer folk to twynne /
From auarice and soone to repent
But' þat/ is not' my principal entent 432
I preche no þing' but for coueitise
Of' þis matier it ought Inough suffise
Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of' olde þinges longe tyme agoon 436
For lewed poeple louen tales olde
which þinges can þay wel report' and holde /
what' trowe ȝe whiles I may preche
And wynne gold and siluer for I teche 440
That' I wil lyue in pouert' wilfully
Nay nay I þought' it/ neuer trewly
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes
I wil do no labour wiþ myn hondes 444
Ne make basketis and lyue þer by
By cause I wil nought' begge ydelly
I wol noon of' thapostles counterfete
I wol haue money. wolle chese and whete / 448
Al were it ȝeuen of' þe prestes page
Or of' þe porest' wydow in a village [*leaf* 187, *back*]
And schold hir children sterue for famyn
Nay I wol drinke licour of' þe wyn 452
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
But' herkneþ lordynges my conclusio*un*
ȝoure likyng' is. þat' I schal telle a tale
Now haue I dronk' a draught' of' corny ale / 456
By god I hope I schal telle ȝow a þing'
That' schal by reso*un* be at' ȝour liking'
For þough myself' be a ful vicious man
A moral tale ȝit I ȝow telle can 460
which I am wont' to preche for to wynn.
Now hold ȝour pees my tale I wol byginne

[*Partial break of one line in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat

IN Flaundres whilom was a companye /
Of ȝonge folkes þat haunted folye 464
As ryot hasard stywes and tauernes
wher as wiþ lutes harpes and gyternes
Thay daunce and play at dees boþe day & nigħt
And ete also and drynk ouer her migħt 468
Thurgh which þay doon þe deuyl sacrifise
wiþinne þe deueles temple in cursed wise
By super*fluite* abhominable
her othes been so greet and so dampnable 472
That it is grisly for to hiere hem swere
Our blisful lordes body þay totere
hem þoughte Iewes rent him nouȝt y-nougħ
And ech of hem at oþeres synne lougħ 476
And right anoon þer come tombesteris
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Whiche þat ben verray þe deueles officeres 480
To kyndle and blowe þe fuyr of leccherie
þat is anexid vnto glotonye
The holy wryt take I to my witnesse ¶ nolite inebriare vino in quo &c.
That luxury is in wyn and dronkenesse 484
lo how þat dronken loth vnkyndely
lay by his doughtres tuo vnwityngly
So dronk he was he niste what he wrought
herodes who-so wel þe story sought 488
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no spurious lines in this MS.*]

whan he of' wyn was repleet' at his fest [*leaf* 188]
Right' at his oughne table ȝaf' his hest
To sle þe baptist' Iohn̄ ful gilteles
Seneca seiþ a good word douteles 492
he saiþ he can no difference fynde
Bituyx a man þat is out of' his mynde
And a man þe which is dronkelewe
But' þat' woodnes fallen in a schrewe 496
Pe*r*seuereth lenger þan doth dronkennesse
O glutonye ful of' corsidnesse
O cause first' of' oure confusio*un*
O origiual of' oure dampnacio*un* 500
Til crist had bought' out' wiþ his blood agayn
lo how dere schortly for to sayn
Abought' was first/ þis cursed felonye
Corupt' was al þis world for glotonye 504
Ad*a*m our fader and his wyf' also
Fro paradys to labour and to wo
were dryuen for þat vice it is no drede
For whils þat' ad*a*m fasted as I rede 508
he was in p*ar*adis and whan þat he
Eet' of' þe fruyt' defendit of' a tre
he was out' cast' to wo and in-to peyne
O. glotony. wel ought' vs on þe pleyne 512
O. wist' a man how many maladyes
Folwith of' excesse and of' glotonyes
he wolde be þe more mesurable
Of' his diete sittyng' at' his table 516
Allas þe schorte þrote þe tendre mouþ
Makeþ þat' Est'. West'. north and south
In erþe in watir in ayer man to swynke
To gete a sely glotou*n* mete and drynke. 520
Of' þis matier o poul wel canstow trete
Mete vnto wombe and wombe vnto mete
Schal god destroyen boþe as powel saiþ
Allas a foul þing' is it by my faiþ 524

Q*ua*m diu ieiunauit ad*a*m in p*ar*adyso fuit comedit et eiectus est statim dux*it* vx*or*em &c.

Esca ventris & vent*er* escis de*us* autem hunc & illam destruet &c.

To say þis word / and fouler is þe dede
whan men so drynke / of^t þe whyt^t and rede — Ad philipenses capitulo 3°
That^t of^t his þrote he makiþ his priue — [*leaf* 138, *back*]
Thurgh̄ þilke cursed superfluite — 528
Thapostil wepyng^t saiþ ful pitously
Ther walkith many of^t which ȝou told haue I
I say it^t now wepyng^t wiþ pitous vois
Thay are enemys of^t cristes croys / — 532
Of^t which þe ende is deth wombe is her god
O wombe / o bely . o stynkyng^t is þi cod
Fulfild of^t dong^t / and of^t corrupcio*u*n
At^t eyþer ende of^t þe foul is þe soun — 536
how gret^t cost^t / and labour is þe to fynde /
These cokes how þey stamp and streyn and grynde /
And torne substa*u*nce in to accident
To fulfille / þy licorous talent — 540
Out^t of^t þe harde boones gete þay
The mary for þay caste nouȝt^t away
That^t may go þurgh̄ þe golet^t softe and soote
Of^t spicery and leuys bark^t and roote — 544
Schal ben his sauce maad to his delyt/
To make him haue a newe appetit^t
But^t certes he þat^t haunteþ suche delices
Is deed þer whiles þat he lyueþ in vices — 548
A licorous þing^t is wyn and dronkenesse
Is ful of^t stryuyng^t and of^t wrecchednesse
O dronke man disfigured is þi face
Sour is þi breþ foul artow to embrace — 552
And þurgh̄ þi dronkenesse sowneþ þe soun
As þough þou seydest^t ay Sampso*u*n Sampso*u*n
And ȝit god wot^t sampson drank^t neuer wyn
Thou fallist^t as it were a stiked swyn — 556
Thy tonge is lost^t and al þin honest^t cure
For dronkenes is verray sepulture
Of^t mannes witt and his discrecio*u*n
In whom þat drynk haþ dominacio*u*n — 560

He can no counseil kepe it is no drede
Ne keep ȝow from þe white and from þe rede
Namely fro þe white wyn of leepe
That is to selle in Fleetstreet or in Chepe 564
This wyn of Spayne crepith subtily [leaf 189]
In oþer wynes growyng faste by
Of which þer riseth such fumosite /
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes þre / 568
And weneth þat he be at hom in Chepe
He is in Spayne right at þe toun of lepe /
Nought at þe Rochel ne at Burdeaux toun
And þanne wol þai say Sampsoun Sampsoun. 572
But herken lordyngs o word I ȝou pray /
That alle þe souerayn actes dar I say
Of victories in þe olde testament
That þorugh þe verray god omnipotent 576
were doon in abstinence and in prayere /
Lokith þe bible and þer ȝe may it hiere
Loke atthila þe grete conquerour
Deyd in his sleep with schame and dishonour 580
Bleedyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse /
A captayn schuld ay lyue in sobrenesse
And ouer al this aryse ȝow right wel
what was comaunded vnto lamuel 584
Nought samuel but lamuel say I
Redith þe bible and fyndeþ expresly
Of wyn ȝeuyng / to hem þat han Iustice
No more of þis for it may wel suffice 588
And now I haue I-spoke of glotonye /
Now wil I ȝow defende hasardrye
¶ Hasard is verray moder of lesynges
And of deceipt of cursed forsweringes 592
Blaspheme of crist manslaught and wast also /
Of catel and of tyme. forther mo.
It is reproef and contrair to honour
For to be halde a comun hasardour 596

And euer þe heyer he is of astaat
The more is he holden desolaat
If þat a prince vse hasardrie
In alle gouernance and policie 600
He is as by comun opinio*un*
Holde þe lasse in reputacio*un*
Stilbon þat was I-holde a wis embasito*ur* [*leaf* 189, *back*]
was sent in to Corinthe with gret honou*r* 604
Fro lacidome to make hir alliaunce
And whan him cam him happede p*ar* chaunce /
That alle þe grettest þat were of þat lond /
Playing atte hasard he hem fond 608
For which as soone as it mighte be
He stal him hoom ȝein to his contre
And saide ther I nyl nouȝt lese my name
I nyl not take on me so gret diffame 612
ȝow for to allie vnto noon hasardoures /
Sendeth oþerwise embasitoures
For by my trouþe me were leuer dye
Than I ȝow scholde / to hasardours allye / 616
For ȝe þat ben so glorious in honoures
Schal not allie ȝow with hasardoures
As by my wil / ne as by my trete
This wise philosophre þus sayd he 620
Io eek þat þe king Demetrius
The king of Parthes as þe saith vs
Sent him a paire dees of gold in scorn
For he had vsed tauern þer toforn 624
For which he hield his gloir and his renoun
At no valieu or reputacio*un*
Lordes may fynde oþer maner play
Honest ynough to dryue away þe day 628
Now wol I speke of oþes fals and grete /
A word or tuo as oþer bookes entrete
Gret swering is a þing abhominable
And fals swering is more reprouable 632

The hyhe god forbad sweryng' at' al /
witnes on Mathew but' in special
Of' sweryng' saith þe holy Ieremye
Thou schalt' say soth þin oþes and not' lye 636
And swere in doom and eek' in rightwisnes
But' ydel sweryng' is a cursednes
Bihold and se þer in þe firste table
Of' hihe goddes heste honurable / 640
How þat' þe secounde heste is this [leaf 190]
Tak' not' in ydel ne his name amys
Lo he rather forbedith such sweryng'
Than homicide or many a corsed þing' 644
I say as by order þus it stondith
This knoweth he þat' þe hestes vnderstondeth
how þat þe second hest' of' god is that
And forþermore I wol þe telle a plat' 648
The vegance schal not' parte fro his hous
That' of' his othes is outrageous
By goddes precious hert' and by his nayles
And by þe blood of' crist' þat/ is in hayles 652
Seuen is my chaunce and also cink' and tray
By goddis armes and þou falsly play
This daggere schal þurgh þin herte goo
This fruyt' comeþ of' þe bicchid boones tuo 656
Forswering' Ire / falsnes homicide /
Now for þe loue of' crist' þat' for vs dyde
leueth ȝoure othis boþe gret' and smale
But sires now wol I telle forþ my tale 660
These riottours þre / of' which I ȝou tello
longe erst' þan prime rong' eny belle
were set' hem in a tauern for to drynke
And as þay sat' þay herd a belle clinke 664
Biforn a corps was caried to þe graue
That' oon of' hem gan calle vnto his knaue
Go bet' quoþ he and axe redily
what' corps is þat passeth her forþ by 668

And loke þou report his name wel
Sire quod he but' þat' nedeþ neuer a del
It' was me told er ȝe com heer tuo houres
He was p*ar* dy an old felaw of' ȝoures 672
And sodeinly he was I-slayn to nigh't'
Fordronk' as he sat' on his bench vpright'
Ther com a priue thef' men clepen deth
That' in þis contre al þe peple sleth 676
And with his spere he smot' his hert' a tuo
And went' his way wiþoute wordes mo
he haþ a þousand slayn þis pestilence [*leaf* 190, *back*]
And maister er ȝe come in his p*re*sence / 680
Me þinkeþ þat' it is ful necessarie /
For to be war of' such an aduersarie
Beþ redy for to meete him euermore
Thus taughte me my dame I say nomore 684
By seinte mary sayde þe tauerner
The child saiþ soþ for he haþ slayn þis ȝeer
Hens ouer a myle wiþinne a gret' village
Boþe man and wo*m*man. child and page 688
I trowe his habitacio*u*n be þere
To ben auysed gret' wisdom it were
Er þat' he dede a man þat' dishonour
ȝe goddis armes quod þis ryottour 692
Is it' such p*er*il with him for to meete /
I schal him seeke by way and eek' by strete
I make avow to goddis digne boones
Herkneþ felaws we þre ben al oones 696
let' ech of' vs hold vp his hond to other
And ech of' vs bycome oþeres broþer
And we wil slee þis false traitour deth
He schal be slayne/ that' so many sleeth 700
By goddis dignete er it be night'
Togideres han þese þre here trouþes plight
To lyue and deye ech of' he wiþ oþer
As þough he were his oughne sworne broþer 704

And vp þai startyn al dronke in þis rage /
And forþ þai goon towardes þat village
Of which þe tauerner haþ spoke biforn
And many a grisly oth þan han þay sworn 708
And cristes blessed body þay torent
Deth schal be deed if þat þay may him hent
Right as þay wolde haue torned ouer a style
whan þai han goon nought fully a myle 712
An old man and a pore with hem mette
This olde man ful mekely hem grette /
And saide þus lordynges god ȝow se
The proudest of þe ryotoures þre 716
Answerd aȝein. what carle wiþ meschaunce[1] [leaf 191]
why artow al forwrapped saue þi face [1 A blank line is in MS after l. 717 and 718.]
whi lyuest þou in so gret an age
This olde man gan loke on his visage 720
And saide þus for þat I can not fynde /
A man þough þat I walke in to Inde
Neiþer in Cite noon ne in village
That wol chaunge his ȝouþe for myn age 724
And *þer*fore moot I haue myn age stille /
As longe tyme as it is goddes wille
And deth allas ne wil not haue my lif
Thus walk I lik a resteles caytif 728
And on þe ground which is my modres gate
I knokke with my staf erly and late
And saye leeue moder let me In
Lo how I wane fleisch. and blood and skyn 732
Allas whan schuln my boones ben at rest
Moder with ȝow wil I chaunge my chest/
That in my chamber. longe tyme haþ be
Ȝe for an haire clout/ to wrap in me 736
But ȝet to me sche wil not do þat grace
For which ful pale and welkid is my face
But sires to ȝow. it is no curtesye
To speke vnto an old man vilonye 740

But he trespas in word or elles dede
In holy writ' ȝe may ȝour self' wel rede
Aȝens an old man hoor vpon his hede
ȝe schold arise wherefor I ȝow rede / 744
Ne doth vnto an old man more harm now
Na more þan ȝe wolde men dede to ȝow:
In age. if' þat' ȝe may so long' abyde
And god be with ȝou / wher' so ȝe go or ryde 748
I moot' go þider as I haue to goo
Nay olde cherl by god thou schalt' not so
Sayde þat' oþer hasardour anoon
Thou partist' nouȝt' so lightly by seint' Iohn̄ 752
Thou spak' right' now of' þat traytour deþ [*leaf* 191, *back*]
That' in þis contre alle oure frendes sleþ
Haue her my trouth̄ as þou art' his aspye /
Tel wher he is or elles þou schalt' dye / 756
By god and by þat' holy sacrament/
For soþly þou art' oon of' his assent
To schewe vs ȝonge folk' þe false theef'
Now sires þan if' þat' ȝow be so leef' 760
To fynde deþ torn vp þis croked way
For in þat' groue I laft' him by my fay
Vnder a tree and þer he wil abyde
Ne for ȝour bost' he nyl him no þing' hyde 764
Se ȝe þat' ook' right' þer ȝe schuln him fynde
God saue ȝow þat' bought' aȝein mankynde
And ȝow amend þus sayde þis olde man
And euerich of' þese riotoures ran 768
Til þay come to the tre and ther þay founde
Of' florins fyn of' gold y-coyned rounde
wel neygh a seuen busshels as me thought'
No lenger þanne after deþ þay sought 772
But' ech of' hem so glad was of' þat' sight
For þat' þe florens so faire were and bright
That doun þai sette hem by þat precious hord
The ȝongest' of' hem spak/ þe firste word 776

Breþeren takeþ keep what I schal say
My witte is gret' þough þat' I bourde and play
This tresour haþ fortune to vs ȝiuen
In mirth and iolyte our lif' to lyuen 780
And lightly as it comth so wil we spende
Ey goddis precious dignite who wende
To day þat' we schuld haue so fair a grace
But might' þis gold be caried fro þis place 784
Hom to myn hous or ellis vnto ȝoures
For wel I wot' þat þis gold is nouȝt' oures
Than were we . in heyh felicite
But trewely by day it may not' be 788
Men wolde say þat' we were þeues stronge /
And for oure tresour doon vs for to honge
This tresour moste caried be by night' [leaf 192]
As wysly and as slely as it might 792
wherfore I rede þat' cut' among' vs alle
Be drawe and let' se wher þe cut' wil falle
He þat' haþ þe cut' wiþ herte bliþe/
Schal renne to þe toun and þat' ful swithe 796
To bring' vs bred and wyn ful priuely
And tuo of' vs schal kepe subtilly
This tresour wel and if' he wil not' tarie
whan it' is night' we wol þis tresour carie 800
By oon assent' þer as vs likeþ best/
That' oon of' hem þe cut/ brought' in his fest/
And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle
And it fel on þe ȝongest' of' hem alle / 804
And forþ toward þe toun he went anoon
And al so soone as he was agoon
That' oon of' hem . spak' vnto þat oþer
Thow wost/ wel þat' þou art' my sworne broþer 808
Thy profyt' wol I . telle þe anoon
Thow wost' wel þat' our felaw is a-goon
And her is gold and þat' ful gret plente
That' schal departed be among' vs þre / 812

But' naþeles if' I can schape it so
That' it departed were bitwix vs tuo
had I not' doon a frendes torn to þe /
That' oþer answerd I not' how þat' may be/ 816
he wot' wel þat' þe gold is wiþ vs tway
what schulde we þan do what' schuld we say
Schal it be counsail sayde þe ferste schrewe
And I schal telle þe in wordes fewe / 820
what' we schul doon and bringe it wel aboute
I g*ra*unte quod þat' other wiþoute doute
That' by my trouþe I wil þe nought bywray
Now quod þe first' þou wost' wel we ben tway 824
And two of' vs schuln strenger be þan oon
lok' whanne he is sett' and þat' anoon
Arys as þou woldest' with him pleye
And I schal ryf' him thurgh þe sydes tweye 828
whils þou strogelest wiþ him as in game [*leaf* 192, *back*]
And with þi dagger loke þou do þe same
And þan schal al þe gold departed be
My dere frend bitwixe þe and me 832
Than may we oure lustes fulfille
And play at' dees right' at' our owne wille
And þus accorded ben þese schrewes twayn
To sle þe þridde . as ȝe herd me sayn 836
This ȝongest/ which þat' wente to þe toun
Ful fast' in hert/ he rollith vp and doun
The beaute of' þe florins newe and bright'
O lord quod he if' so were þat' I might' 840
Haue al þis gold vnto my self' alloone
Ther is no man þat' lyueth vnder þe troone
Of' gold þat schulde lyue so mery as I
And atte last' þe feend oure enemy 844
Put' in his þought' þat' he schuld poyso*un* beye
wiþ which he mighte sle his felaws tweye
For-why þe feend fond him in such lyuynge
That' he had leue to sorwe him to brynge 848

For þis witterly. was his entent
To slen hem boþe and neuer to repent/
And forth he goþ no lenger wold he tary
In to þe toun vnto a potecary / 852
And prayde him þat' he him wolde selle
Som poysoun þat' he might' his rattis quelle
And eek' þer was a polkat' in his hawe /
As he sayde his capouns had I-slawe / 856
And said he wold him wreke if' þat' he might'
On vermyn þat' destroyed him by night
Thapotecary answerd and þou schalt' haue
A þing' þat' also god my soule saue 860
In al þis world þer nys no creature
That' ete or dronk' had of' þis confecture
Nought' but' þe mountaunce of' a corn of' whete
That' he ne schuld his lif' anoon forlete / 864
ȝe sterue he schal and þat' in lasse while
Than þou wilt' goon a paas not' but' a myle /
The poysoun is so strong' and violent [leaf 193]
This cursed man haþ in his hond I-hent' 868
This poysoun in a box & sins he ran
In to þe nexte stret' vnto a man
And borwed him large botels þre
And in þe two his poysoun poured he 872
The þrid he keped clene for his drynke
For al þe night' he schop him for to swynke
In carying' the gold out' of' þat' place
And whan þis riotour with sory grace 876
had fillid with wyn his botels þre
To his felaws aȝein repaireth he
what' nedith it' to sermoun it more
For right' as þay had cast/ his deth bifore 880
Right' so þay han him slayn and þat anoon
And whan þis was I-doon þan spak' þat' oon
Now let' vs drynk' and sitte and make vs mery
And siþþen we wil his body bery 884

And afterward it' happed hem par cas
To take þe botel þer þe poysoun was
And drank' and ȝaf' his felaw drink' also
For which þay sterued boþe tuo 888
But' certes I suppose þat' amycen
wrot' neuer in Canoun ne in non fen
Mo wonder sorwes of' empoisonyng'
Thus hadde þese wrecches tuo here endyng' 892
Thus endid been þese homicides tuo
And eek' þe fals empoysoner also /
O cursed synne ful of' cursednesse
O traytorous homicidy o wikkednesse 896
O glotony luxurie and hasardrye /
Thou blasphemour of' crist' with vilanye
And oþes grete of' vsage and of' pride
Allas mankynde how may it bytyde 900
Ther to þy creatour which þat' þe wrought'
And wiþ his precious herte blood þe bought'
Thou art' so fals and so vnkynde allas
Now good men god forȝeue ȝow ȝour trespas 904
And ware ȝow fro þe synne of' auarice [*leaf* 193, *back*]
Myn holy p*ar*doun may ȝou alle warice
So þat' ȝe offren noblis or starlinges
Or elles siluer spones broches or rynges 908
Bowiþ ȝour hedes vnder þis holy bulle
Comeþ forþ ȝe wyues and offreþ ȝour wolle
Ȝour names I entre her in my rolle anoon
In to þe blis of' heuen schul ȝe goon 912
I ȝow assoile by myn heyh power
If' ȝe woln offre as clene and eek' als cler
As ȝe were born. and sires lo þus I preche /
And Ihū crist' þat' is oure soules leche 916
So graunte ȝow his p*ar*doun to receyue
For þat' is best' I wil not' ȝow disceyue
But' sires o word forȝat' I in my tale /
I haue reliks and p*ar*doun in my male / 920

As fair as eny man in Engelond
which were me I-ȝeue by popes hond
If' eny of' ȝow wol of' deuocioun
Offren and haue my*n* absolucio*un* 924
Cometh forth ano*n* knelith her a-doun
And ȝe schul haue here my p*ar*do*un*
Or elles takith p*ar*do*un* as ȝe wende
Al newe and freissch at' euery townes ende 928
So þat' ȝe offren alway new and newe /
Nobles and pens which þat' ben good and trewe /
It' is an honur to eu*er*y þat' is heer
That' may haue a suffisa*un*t' p*ar*doner 932
Tassoile ȝow in contre as ȝe ryde
For auentures which þat' may bytyde
For p*ar*aunter · þer may falle oon or tuo
Doun of' his hors and breke his nekke a-tuo 936
loke such a seurete is to ȝou alle
That I am in ȝour felaschip I-falle
That' may assoyle ȝou boþe more and lasse
whan þat' þe soule schal fro þe body passe 940
I rede þat' oure hoste schal bygynne
For he is most' enuoliped in synne
Com forþ sir*e* ost' and offer first' anoon [*leaf* 194]
And þou schalt' kisse þe reliquis euerichoon 944
ȝe for a grote vnbocle þi purs
Nay nay quod he þan haue I cristes curs
let' be quod he it schal not' be so theech
Thou woldest make me kisse þin olde breech̄ 948
And swere it were a relik' of' a seynt'
Though it were wiþ þi foundement depeynt
But' by þe cros which þat' seynt heleyn fond
I wold I had þy coylons in myn hond 952
In stede of' reliks or of' seintuary /
let' cut' hem of' I wol help hem to cary
Thay schul be schryned in an hogges tord
This p*ar*doner answerde nat' o word 956

So wroþ he was he wolde no word say
Now quod oure hostˢ I wol no lenger play
wiþ þe ne with noon oþer angry man
Butˢ rightˢ anoon þis worthy knightˢ bygan 960
whan þat he saugh þatˢ al þe peple loughh̄
No more ofˢ þis for it is rightˢ ynoughh̄
Sir pardoner be glad and merry ofˢ cheere
And ȝe sir hostˢ þat ben to me so deere 964
I pray ȝow þatˢ ȝe kisse þe pardoner
And pardoner I pray ȝow drawe þ ȝow ner
And as we dede letˢ vs laugh and play
Anoon þay kisse and riden forþ her way / 968
¶ Here endeth þe pardoneres tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP B. (β. FRAGMENT III.)

§ 4. THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

¶ Here bygynneth þe Schipman his tale/

A Marchaunt' whilom dwelled at' seint Denys
That' riche was for which men hild him wys
A wyf' he had of' excellent' beaute
And companable and reuerent' was sche
which is a þing' þat causeth more despence
Than worth is al þe cher and reuerence 1196
That' men doon hem at' festes or at daunces
Such salutaciouns and continaunces
Passeth as doþ þe schadow on a wal
But' wo is him þat' paye moot' for al 1200
The sely housbond algat' moste pay [*leaf* 194, *back*]
He most' vs cloþe . in ful good array
Al for his oughne worschip richely
In which array we daunce iolily 1204
And if' þat' he may not' parauenture
Or elles wil not/ such dispens endure
But' þynkeþ it is wasted and I-lost'
Than moot' anoþer paye for oure cost' 1208
Or lene vs gold and þat' is perilous
The worþy marchaunt' huld a noble hous/
For which he hadde alday gret' repair
For his largesce and for his wyf' was fair 1212
what' wonder is but herkneþ to my tale
Amonges al þese gestes gret' and smale /
Ther was a monk' a fair man and a bold
I trowe þritty wynter he was old 1216
That' euer in oon was drawyng' to þat place /
This ȝonge monk' þat' was so fair of' face

Aqueynted was so wiþ þe goode man
Siþ þat' her firste knowleche bygan 1220
That' in his hous as familier was he /
As it' possibil is a frend to be
And for as mochil as þis goode man
And eek' þis monk' of' which þat' I bygan 1224
were boþe tuo I-born in oon village /
The monk' him claymeth as for cosynage
And he ȝein he saith nat' oones nay
But' was as glad þer of' as foul of' day 1228
For to his hert' it was a gret' plesaunce /
Thus ben þay knyt' wiþ eterne alliaunce
And ilk' of' hem gan oþer to assure /
Of' broþerhed whil þat' her lif' may dure 1232
Fre was daun Iohn̄ and manly of' despence /
As in þat' hous and ful of' diligence
To do plesaunce and also gret' costage
He nought' forȝat' to ȝeue þe leste page 1236
In al þat' hous but' after her degre /
He ȝaf' þe lord and siþþen þe meyne /
whan þat' he com som maner honest' þing' [leaf 195]
For which þay were as glad of' his comyng' 1240
As foul is fayn. whan þat þe sonne vpriseþ
No mor of' þis as now for it suffiseþ
But' so bifel þis marchaunt on a day /
Schop him to make redy his array / 1244
Toward þe toun of' Bruges for to fare /
To byen þer a porcio*un* of' ware
For which he hath to paris sent' anoon
A messanger and prayed had dan Iohn̄ 1248
That' he schuld come to seint Denys and play
with him and wiþ his wyf' a day or tway
Er he to brigges went'. in alle wise
This nobil monk/ of' which I ȝow deuyse 1252
Haþ of' his abbot' as him list' licence
By cause he was a man of' heih prudence

And eek' an officer out/ for to ryde /
To se her graunges and her bernes wyde / 1256
And vnto seint denys he comeþ anoon
who was so welcome as my lord dan Ioħñ
Oure deere cosyn ful of' curtesie /
with him broughť he a Iubbe of' maluesie 1260
And eek/ anoþer ful of' wyn vernage
And volantyn as ay was his vsage
And þus I lete hem ete and drynk' and play
This marchaunt' and þis monk' a day or tway 1264
The þridde day þis marchaund vp he riseth
And on his needes sadly him auyseth
And vp in to his countour hous goþ he
To rekyn wiþ himself' as wel may be / 1268
Of' þilke ȝer how þat' it with him stood
And how þat' he dispended had his good
And if' þat' he encresced were or noon
His bookes and his bagges many oon 1272
He haþ byforn him on his counter bord
For riche was his tresor and his hord
For which ful fast' his countour dore he schette
And eek' he wolde no man schold him lette 1276
Of' his accomptes for þe mene tyme / [leaf 195, back]
And þus he sat' til it was passed prime
Dan Ioħñ was risen in þe morn also
And in the gardyn walkith to and fro 1280
And haþ his þinges said ful curteisly
This good wyf' com walkyng' ful priuely
In to a gardyn þer he walkeþ softe
And him salueþ as sche haþ doon ful ofte 1284
A mayde child com in hir compaignie
which as hir list' sche may gouerne and gye
For ȝit' vnder þe ȝerde was þe mayde
O dere cosyn myn dan Ioħñ sche sayde 1288
what' ayleþ ȝow so raþe to arise
Nece quod he it aught' ynough suffise

Fyue houres for to slepe a nightˢ
Butˢ itˢ were for eny old palled wightˢ 1292
As ben þese weddid men þatˢ lye and dare
As in a forme liþ a wery hare
were al forstraughtˢ with houndes gretˢ and smale
Butˢ dere nece why be ȝe so pale / 1296
I trowe certis þatˢ oure goode man
hath on ȝow laborid sith þe nightˢ bygan
Thatˢ ȝow were nede to resten hastiliche
And with þatˢ word he lowgh ful meriliche 1300
And ofˢ his owne þoughtˢ he was al reed
This faire wyfˢ bygan to schake hir heed
And sayde þus ȝe godˢ wotˢ al quod sche /
Nay cosyn myn it stantˢ notˢ so wiþ me 1304
For by þatˢ godˢ þatˢ ȝafˢ me soule and lifˢ
In al þe reme ofˢ Fraunce is þer no wifˢ
Thatˢ lasse lustˢ haþ to þatˢ sory play
For I may synge / allas and waylaway 1308
Thatˢ I was born butˢ to no wightˢ quod sche
Dar I notˢ telle how it stontˢ wiþ me
Wherfor I þinkˢ outˢ ofˢ þis lond to wende
Or elles ofˢ my selfˢ to make an ende 1312
So ful am I ofˢ drede and eekˢ ofˢ care
This monkˢ bygan vpon þis wifˢ to stare
And sayd allas my nece god forbede [*leaf* 196]
Thatˢ ȝe for eny sorw or eny drede / 1316
Fordo ȝour selfˢ butˢ telleþ me ȝour greefˢ
P*ar*auenture I may in ȝoure mescheefˢ
Councel or help and þerfor telleþ me
Al ȝour annoy for it schal be secre 1320
For on my portos I make an oth
Thatˢ neuer in my lifˢ for liefˢ ne loþ
Schal I ofˢ no counseil ȝou bywray
The same aȝein quod sche to ȝow I say 1324
By god and by þis portos wil I swere
Though men me wolde al in peces tere

Ne schal I neuer for to go to helle /
Bywreye word. of' þing' þat' ȝe me telle 1328
Not' for no cosynage ne alliaunce
But' verrayly for loue and affiaunce
Thus ben þay sworn and her-vpon I-kist'
And ilk' of' hem told oþer what' hem list' 1332
Cosyn quod sche if' þat' I had a space /
As I haue noon and namly in þis place
Then wold I telle a legend of' my lyf'
what' I haue suffred siþ I was a wyf' 1336
wiþ myn housbond þough he be ȝour cosyn
Nay quod þis monk' by god and seint martyn
He is no more cosyn vnto me
Than is þis leef' þat' hongeþ on þe tre 1340
I clepid him so by seint' Denis of' Fraunce
To haue þe more cause of' acqueyntaunce
Of' ȝow which I haue loued specially
Abouen alle wommen sikerly 1344
This swere I ȝow on my professioun
Tellith ȝoure greef' lest' þat' he come a doun
And hasteth ȝow and goþ ȝour way anoon
My deere loue quod sche. O dan Iohn̄ 1348
Ful leef' me were þis counseil to hyde
But' out' it moot' it may no more abyde
Myn housbond is to me þe worste man
That' euer was siþþe þe world bigan 1352
But siþ I am a wif' it sit nought' me [*leaf* 196, *back*]
To telle eny wight of' oure priuete
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
God schilde I scholde telle it for his grace / 1356
A wyf' ne schal not' say of' hir housbonde
But' al honour as I can vnderstonde
Saue vnto ȝow þus moche telle I schal
As help me god he is not' worþ at' al 1360
In no degre þe valieu of' a flie
But' ȝit' me greueth most' his nigardye

And wel ȝe wot' þat' wymmen naturelly
Desiren sixe þinges as wel as I 1364
They wolde þat' here housbondes scholde be
hardy and wys and riche and fre /
And buxom to his wyf' and freisch on bedde
But' by þe lord þat' for vs alle bledde 1368
For his honour my seluen to array
A sonday next' comyng' ȝit' most' I pay
An hundred frank' or elles I am lorn)
ȝit were me leuer þat' I were vnborn) 1372
Than me were doon a sclaunder or vilenye
And if' myn housbond eek' might' it espie
I ner but lost' and þerfor I ȝow pray
[. 1376
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
For a certein day I wol ȝow pay 1380
And do to ȝow what' pleasaunce and seruise
That' I may do right' as ȝou list deuyse
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce
As foul as hadde Geneloun of' Fraunce 1384
This gentil monk' answard in þis manere
Now trewely myn owne lady deere /
I haue on ȝow so gret' pite and reuthe /
That I ȝow swere and plighte ȝow my treuþe 1388
That' whan ȝour housbond is to Flaundres fare
I schal deliuer ȝow out' of' ȝoure care
For I wol bringe ȝow an hundred frankes /
And with þat' word he caught' hir by þe schankes 1392
And hir embraced hard and kist' hir ofte
Goth now ȝour way quod he al stille and softe /
And let' vs dyne as sone as ȝe may
For by my chilindre it is prime of' day [*leaf* 197] 1396
Goth now and beth as trew as I schal be /
Now elles god forbede sire quod sche /

And forþ sche goth as ioly as a pye /
And bad þe cookes þat' þai schold hem hye / 1400
So þat' men myghte dyne and þat' anoon
vp to hir housbond þis wif' is goon
And knokkeþ at / his dore boldely
Qy la quod he. peter it am I 1404
Quod sche how longe sire wol ȝe fast'
how longe tyme wol ȝe reken and cast'
ȝour sommes and ȝour bokes and ȝour þinges /
The deuel haue part' of' alle such rekenynges 1408
ȝe haue I-nough par dy of' goddes sonde /
Com doun to day and let' ȝour bagges stonde
Ne be ȝe not' aschamed that' Daun Iohn̄
Schal al day fastyng' þus elenge goon 1412
what' let' vs hiere masse and gowe dyne
wif' quod þis man litel canstow diuine
The curious besynesse þat' we haue
For of' vs chapmen so god me saue 1416
And by þat lord that' cleped is seint' Iue
Scarsly among' twelue two schuln priue
Continuelly lastyng' in to her age
we may wel make cheer and good visage 1420
And dryue forth þe world as it may be
And kepen our estat' in priuete
Til we be deed or elles þat' we play
A pilgrimage or goon out of' þe way 1424
And þerfor haue I / gret' necessite
Vpon þis queynte world to auyse me
For euermor we moste stond in drede
Of' hap and fortun / in our chapmanhede 1428
To Flaundres to morw at day
And come agayn as soone as I may
For which my deere wif' I þe byseeke
And be to euery wight' buxom and meeke 1432
And for to kepe oure good be curious
And honestly gouerne wel our hous [*leaf* 197, *back*]

Thou hast' ynough in eu*er*y maner wise
That' to a thrifty housbond may suffise 1436
The lakkeþ noon array ne no vitaile
Of' siluer in þy purs þou mayst' not faile
And with þat' word his conto*ur* dore he schitte
And doun he goþ no lenger wold he lette 1440
And hastily a masse was þer sayd
And spedily þe tables were I-layd
And to þe dyner faste þay hem spedde /
And rychely þis Chapman þe monk' fedde / 1444
And after dyner daun Ioñ sobrely
This chapman took' on part' and priuely /
Sayd him þus. cosyn it stondeth so
That' wel I se to brigges wol ȝe go / 1448
God and seint' austyn spede ȝou and gyde /
I pray ȝow cosyn wisly þat' ȝe ryde
Gouerneth ȝow also of' ȝour diete
Al temp*er*elly and namely in þis hete 1452
Bitwix vs tuo nedeth no straunge fare
Far wel cosyn. god schilde ȝou fro care
If' eny þing' þer be by day or nigh̄t'
If' it lay in my power and my migh̄t' 1456
That' ȝe wil me comaunde in eny wise
It' schal be doon right' as ȝe wol deuyse /
O thing' er þat ȝe goon if' it might' be /
I wolde pray ȝow for to lene me 1460
An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye
For certeyn bestis þat' I moste beye /
To store with a place þat' is oures
God help me so I wolde it were ȝoures 1464
I schal not' faile seurly of' my day
Nough̄t' for a þousand frankes a myle way
But' let' þis þing' be secre I ȝow pray /
For for þe bestis þis nigh̄t' most' I pay 1468
And fare now wel myn owne cosyn deere
G*ra*unt mercy of' ȝour cost' and of' ȝour cheere

This noble marchaun*t*' gentilly anoon)
Answerd and sayde. O cosyn daun Ioħñ [*leaf* 198] 1472
Now sikerly þis is a smal request'
My gold is ȝoures whanne þat' ȝow lest/
And nought' oonly gold but' my chaffare /
Tak' what' ȝow liste / god schilde ȝe spare 1476
But' oon þing' is ȝe know it' wel ynough
Of' chapmen þat' her money is here plough
we may creaunce whils we haue a name
But' goldles for to be it is no game 1480
Pay it agayn whan it liþ in ȝour ese /
After my might' ful fayn wold I ȝow plese /
This hundred frankes he fet' forth anoon
And priuely he took' hem to daun Ioħñ 1484
No wight' in al þis world wist' of' þis loone
Sauyng' þe marchaund and dan Ioħñ alloone
Thay drynke & speke and rome a while and play
Til þat' dan Ioħñ rydeþ to his abbay 1488
The morwe cam and forth þe marchaund rideth
To Flaundres-ward his prentis wel him gydeth
Til þat/ he cam to Brigges merily
Now goth þis marchaund faste and busily 1492
Aboute his neede and bieth and creaunceth
He neither pleyeth atte dys ne dauncep
But' as a marchaund schortly for to telle
he lad his lyf' / and þer I let' him duelle 1496
The sonday next' þe marchaund is agoon
To seint' denys I-come is daun Ioħñ
with croune and berd al freisch and newe I-schaue
In al þe hous þer nas so litel a knaue 1500
Ne no wight' elles þat' he nas ful fayn
For þat' my lord dan Ioħñ was come agayn)
And schortly to þe poynte for to gon
This faire wif' acordith with dan Ioħñ 1504
That' for þese hundred frank' he schuld al night'
Haue hir in his armes bolt/ vpright'

And þis acord p*ar*formed was in dede /
In mirth al nigħt' a bisy lif' þay lede / 1508
Til it was day þat' dan Ioħñ went' his way
And bad þe meigne far wel haue good day [*leaf* 198, *back*]
For noon of' hem ne no wigħt' in þe toun
Hath of' dan Ioħñ right' noon suspeccioun 1512
And forth he rideth hom to his abbay
Or wher him list/ no more of' him I say /
¶ This marchaund whan þat' endid was þe faire
To seynt' denys. he gan to repeire / 1516
And with his wif' he makeþ fest' and cheere
And tellith hir þat' chaffar is so deere
That' needes most' he make a cheuisaunce
For he was bounde in a reconisaunce 1520
To paye twenty þousand scheldes anoon
For which þis marchaund is to paris goon
To borwe of' certeyn frendes þat he hadde /
A certein frank*es* and some with him he ladde / 1524
And whan þat' he was come in to þe toun
For gret' chiertee and gret' affeccioun
Vnto Dan Ioħñ he first' goth him to play
Nought' for to borwe of' him no kyn monay 1528
But' for to wite and se of' his wel fare
And for to telle him of' his chaffare
As frendes doon whan þay ben met' in fere
Dan Ioħñ him maketh fest' and mery cheere 1532
And he him told agayn ful specially
How he had bought' right' wel and graciously
Thanked be god / al his marchaundise
Saue þat' he most' in alle maner wise / 1536
Maken a cheuyssauns as for his best'
And þan he schulde be in ioye and rest'
Dan Ioħñ answerde certis I am fayn
That' ȝe in hele are comen hom agayn 1540
And if' þat' I were riche as haue I blisse
Of' twenty þousand scheld schuld ȝe not mysse

For ȝe so kyndely þis oþer day
lente me gold and as I can and may 1544
I þanke ȝow by god and by seint' Iame /
But' naþeles I took' it to oure dame
ȝoure wif' þe same gold aȝein
vpon ȝour bench̄. sche wot' it wel certeyn [*leaf* 199] 1548
By certein toknes þat' I can hir telle
Now by ȝour leue I may no lenger duelle
Oure abbot' wol out' of' toun anoon
And in his compaignye moot' I goon 1552
Grete wel oure dame my nece swete
And far wel dere cosyn til þat' we meete
This marcha*u*nd which þat' was boþe war and wys /
Creaunced haþ and payed eek' in parys/ 1556
To certeyn lombardes redy in her hond
This so*m*me of' gold and took' of' hem his bond
And hom he goþ a mery as a popin iay
For wel he knew he stood in such array 1560
That' needes most' he wynne in such viage
A þousand frankes aboue al his costage
His wyf' redy mette him at' þe gate
As sche was wont' of' old usage algate 1564
And al þat' nigh̄t' in mirþe þay ben sette
For he was riche and clerly out of' dette
whan it was day þis marchaund gan embrace
his wyf' al newe and kist' hir on hir face 1568
And vp he goth and maked it ful tough̄
No more quod sche by god ȝe haue ynough̄
And wantounly with him sche lay and playde
Till atte laste þus þis marchaund sayde 1572
By god quod he I am a litel wroþ
with ȝow my wyf' alþough it be me loth
And wite ȝe why by god as þat' I gesse
ȝe han I-maad a maner straungenesse / 1576
Bitwixe me and my cosyn dan Io̅h̄n̄
ȝe schold haue warned me er I had goon

That' he ȝow had an hundred frankes payd
By redy tokne and huld him euel appayd 1580
For þat' I to him spak' of' cheuysaunce
Me semed so as by his countenaunce
But' naþeles by god of' heuen king'
I þoughe nought' to axe him no þing' 1584
I pray þe wif' do no more so
Tel me alway er þat' I fro þe go [*leaf* 199, *back*]
If' eny dettour haue in myn absence
I-payed þe lest' in þy necgligence 1588
I may him axe a þing' þat' he haþ payed
This wyf' was not' affered ne affrayed
But' holly sche sayde and þat' anoon
Mary I diffy þat' false monk' dan Ioñ̃ñ 1592
I kepe not' of' his tokenes neuer a del
he took' me a certeyn gold/ þat' wot' I wel
what' euel thedom on his monkes snowte/
For god it wot' I wende wiþoute doute 1596
That' he had ȝeue it me by cause of' ȝow
To do þer with myn honour and my prow
For cosynage and eek' for bele cheer
That' he haþ had ful ofte tyme heer 1600
But' synnes þat' I stonde in þis disioynt
I wol answer ȝow schortly to þe poynt
Ȝe han mo slakke dettours þan am I
For I wol pay ȝow wel and redily 1604
Fro day to day and if' so be I faile
I am ȝour wif' score it vpon my taile
And I schal paye it as soone as I may
For by my trouþe I haue on myn array 1608
And nought' on wast' bistowed it euery del
And for I haue bistowed it so wel
To ȝoure honour for goddes sake I say
As beþ nought wroþ but' let' vs laugh̃ and play / 1612
Ȝe schul my ioly body haue to wedde/
By god I wol not' pay ȝow but' on bedde /

Forȝeue it me myn owne spouse deere /
Turne hiderward and make better cheere 1616
This marchaund saugh noon oþer remedy
And for to chide. it nas but foly
Siþ þat þe þing may not amendid be /
wif he sayde / and I forȝiue it þe 1620
But by þi lif ne be no more so large
keep better my good þis ȝiue I þe in charge
Thus endeþ now my tale and god vs sende
Talyng ynough vnto our lyues ende / Amen / 1624

[*Foot of page. No other break in the MS.*]

WEl sayd by corpus boones quod oure host' [leaf 200]
Now longe mot' þou sayle by þe cost'
Sir gentil maister gentil mariner
God ȝiue þe monk' a þousand last' quadeȝer 1628
haha felaws be war for such a iape
The monk' put' in þe mannes hood an ape
And in his wyues eek' by seint' austyn)
Drawe þ no monkes more vnto ȝour In 1632
But' now pasouer and let' vs loke aboute
who schal telle first' of' al þis route /
Anoþer tale / and wiþ þat' wiþ þat' word he sayde /
As curteisly as it had ben a mayde / 1636
My lady prioresse by ȝour leue
So þat' I wist' I scholde ȝow not greue
I wolde deme þat' ȝe telle scholde
A tale next' if' so were þat' ȝe wolde / 1640
Now wol ȝe vouche sauf' my lady deere /
Gladly quod sche / and sayd in þis manere

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

[THE PROEM.]

O Lord oure lord þy name how merueylous ¶ Domine dominus noster.
Is in þis large world I-sprad quod sche
For nought oonly þy laude precious
Parformed is by men of heih degre
But by mouthes of children þy bounte ¶ Ex ore infancium 1647
Parformed is on oure brest soukynge
Som tyme schewe þay þin heriynge 1649

[*No stanza-breaks in the MS.*]

Wherfore in laude as I best can or may 1650
Of þe and of þy white lily flour
which þat þe bar and is a mayde alway
To telle a story I wil do my labour
Nought þat I may encresce ȝoure honour 1654
For sche hir silf / is honour and roote
Of bounte next hir sone and soules boote/ 1656

O modir mayde. O mayde mooder fre / 1657
O bussh vnbrent/ brennyng in Moises sight/
That rauysshedest / doun fro þe deite
Thurgh þin humblesse þe gost þat in þe alight
Of whos vertu he in þin herte pigh 1661
Conceyued was þe fadres sapience [*leaf* 200, *back*]
help me to telle it in þy reuerence 1663

Lady þi bounte and þy magnificence 1664
Thy vertu and þi gret humilite
Ther may no tonge expres in no science
For som tyme lady er men pray to þe /
Thow gost biforn of þy benignite 1668
And getist vs þe light þurgh þy prayere /
To gyden vs þe way to þy sone sone so deere/ 1670

My connyng' is to weyk' o blisful queene 1671
For to declare þy grete worþinesse
That' I may not' þis in my wyt susteene
But' as a child of' twelf' month old or lesse
Than can vnnethes eny word expresse 1675
Right' so fare I and þerfor I ȝou pray
Endith my song' þat' I schal of' ȝow say 1677

[*A break of one line in the MS.*]

[THE TALE.]

THer was in acy in a greet' Citee 1678
Amonges cristen folk' a Iewerye
Susteyned by a lord of' þat' contre
For foul vsure and lucre of' felonye /
Hateful to crist' and to his compaignye / 1682
And þurgh þe strete men might' ride and wende /
For it' was fre and open at' euerich ende 1684

A litel scole of' cristen folk' þer stood 1685
Doun at' þe forþer ende in which þer were
Children an heep ycomen of' cristes blood
That' lered in þat' scole ȝer by ȝere
Such maner doctrine as men vsed þere 1689
This is to say to synge and to rede
As smale childer doon in her childhede / 1691

Among' þese children was a widow sone 1692
A litel clergeoun þat seue ȝer was of' age
That' day by day to scole was his wone
And eek' also wher-so he saugh þymage
Of' cristes moder had he in vsage 1696
As him was taught' to knele a doun and say /
His Aue maria as he goþ by þe way [*leaf* 201] 1698

Thus haþ þis widow hir litel child I-taught 1699
Oure blisful lady cristes moder deere
To worschip ay and he forȝat it nought
For cely child wil alway soone leere
But ay whan I remembre of þis matiere 1703
Seint Nicholas stont euer in my presence
For he so ȝong to crist dede reuerence 1705

This litil child his litel book lernynge 1706
As he sat in þe scole at his primere
He O alma redemptoris herde synge/
As children lerned her antiphonere
And as he durst he drough hem ner and neere 1710
And herkned euer þe wordes and þe note
Til he þe firste vers couþe al by rote 1712

Nought wist he what þis latyn was to say / 1713
For he so ȝong and tender was of age
But on a day his felaw gan he pray /
To expoune him þe song in his langage/
Or telle him what þis song was in vsage / 1717
This prayd he him to construe and declare
Ful often tyme vpon his knees bare / 1719

His felaw which þat elder was þan he 1720
Answerd him þus. þis song I. haue herd seye
was maked of our blisful lady fre
Hire to saluen and eek hire to preye
To ben our help and socour whan we deye 1724
I can no more expoune in this matere
I lerne song I can no more gramer 1726

And is þis song I-maad in reuerence 1727
Of cristes moder sayde þis Innocent
Now certes I wol do my diligence
To conne it al er cristemasse be went

Though þat' I for my primer schal be schent / 1731
And schal be betyn þries in an hour
I wol it' conne oure lady to honoure 1733

His felaw taught' him homward priuely 1734
From day by day til he couþe it by rote
And þan he song' it wel and boldely [leaf 201, back]
Twyes on þe day it passed þurgh his þrote
From word to word accordyng' to þe note 1738
To scoleward and homward whan he went
On cristes moder was set' al his entent 1740

As I haue sayd þurghout' þe Iewrye 1741
This litel child as he cam to and fro
Ful merily þan wold he synge and crie /
O alma Redemptoris euer mo
The swetnes haþ his herte persed so 1745
Of' cristes moder that' to hir to pray
he can not' stynt of' syngyng' by þe way / 1747

Oure firste foo þe serpent' Sathanas 1748
That' hath in Iewes hert' his waspis nest
Vpswal and sayde / o ebreik' peple allas
Is þis a þing' to ȝow þat is honest'
That' such a boy schal walken as him lest 1752
In ȝoure despyt' and synge of' such sentence
which is aȝens ȝour lawes reuerence 1754

Fro þennes forth þe Iewes han conspired 1755
This Innocent' out' of' þis world to enchace
An homicide þer to han ȝe þay hired
That' in an aley had a priue place
And as þe childe gan forþ by to pace 1759
This false iewe him hent' and huld ful faste /
And kut' his þrote and þrewe him in atte laste 1761

I say in a wardrobe þay him þrew 1762
wher as the Iewes purgen her entraile
O cursed folk' O herodes al newe
what' may ȝour euyl entente ȝou auaile
Morther wol out certeyn it wil nought' faile 1766
And namly þer þonour of' god schuld sprede
The blood out crieþ on ȝour cursed dede / 1768

O martir soudit to Virginite 1769
Now maystow synge folowyng' euer in oon
The white lomb celestial quod sche /
Of' which þe grete eu*au*ngelist' seint' Iohn̄
In pathmos wroot' which seith þat þay goon 1773
Bifore þe lamb and synge a song' al newe [*leaf* 202]
That' neuer fleischly wommen þay knewe 1775

This pore widowe wayteþ al þis night' 1776
After þis litel child but he cometh nought
For which as soone as it' was dayes light'
with face pale in drede and busy þought'
Sche haþ at scole and elles-wher him sought 1780
Til fynally sche gan of' hem aspye
That' he was last/ seyn in þe Iewerie 1782

With moodres pite in hir brest' enclosed 1783
Sche goþ as sche were half' out' of' hir mynde
To euery place wher sche haþ supposed
By liklihede hir child for to fynde
And euer on cristes mooder meke and kynde 1787
Sche cried and atte laste þus sche wrought'
Among' þe cursed Iewes sche him sought' 1789

Sche freyned and sche prayed pitously 1790
To euery Iew þat' dwelled in þat' place
To telle hir if' hir child wente þer by
Thay sayden nay but Ihū of' his grace

ȝaf' in hir þought' wiþinne a litel space 1794
That in þat place after hir sone sche cryde
wher as he was cast' in a put besyde / 1796

O grete god þat' parformedist' þin laude 1797
by mouth of' Innocentȝ lo here þy might'
This gemme of' chastite þis emeraude
And eek' of' martirdom þe ruby bright'
Ther he with þrote I-kut' lay vpright 1801
He. Alma redemptoris gan to synge
So lowde þat' al þe place bigan to rynge 1803

The cristen folk' þat' þurgh þe strete went/ 1804
In comen for to wonder vpon þis þing'
And hastily for the prouost' þay sent
He cam anoon wiþoute tarying'
And heriede crist þat' is of' heuen kyng' 1808
And eek' his moder honour of' mankynde
And after þat' þe Iewes let' he bynde 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun 1811
vp taken was syngyng his song' alway [l. 1f 2^v2, back]
And with honour of' gret processioun
Thay caried him vnto þe next' abbay
His modir swownyng' by þe beere lay 1815
Vnneþe might' þe poeple þat' was þere
This newe Rachel bringe fro þe beere 1817

With torment and with schamful deth echon 1818
This prouost' doþ þese Iewes for to sterue
That' of' þis moerder wist and þat' anoon
he wolde no such cursednesse obserue
Euel schal haue þat' euyl wol deserue 1822
Therfore with wilde hors he dede hem drawe
And after þat' he heng' hem by þe lawe 1824

Vpon his beere ay lith þis Innocent 1825
Biforn þe chief' auter whiles þe masse last'
And after þat þabbot' with his couent'
Haþ sped him for to burie him ful fast'
And whan þay halywater on him cast' 1829
ȝet' spak' þis child. whan spreynde was þe wat*er*
And song' O alma redemptoris mater 1831

This abbot' which þat was an holy man 1832
As monkes ben or elles oughte be
This ȝonge child to coniure he bigan
And sayd O deere child I halse þe
In vertu of' þe holy trinite 1836
Tel me what is þy cause for to synge
Sith þat' þy throte is kit at' my semynge 1838

My þrote is kit vnto my nekke boon 1839
Sayde þis child and as by way of' kynde
I schulde han ben deed long' tyme a goon
But' Iħū crist' as ȝe in bookes fynde
wol þat' his glorie laste and be in mynde 1843
And for þe worschip of' his moder deere
ȝet' may I synge. O alma lowde and cleere 1845

This welle of' mercy cristes moder swete 1846
I loued alway as after my connynge
And whan þat' I my lyf' schulde leete
To me sche cam and bad me for to synge
This antym verraily in my deyinge [*leaf* 203] 1850
As ȝe haue herd and whan þat' I had songe
Me þoughť sche layde a grayn vnder my tonge 1852

Wherfor I synge and synge moot certeyne 1853
In honour of' þat' blisful mayden fre
Til fro my tonge taken is þe greyne
And after þat' þus saide sche to me

My litil child now wil I fecche þe 1857
whan þat' þe grayn is fro þi tonge I-take
Be nought' agast' I wol þe nought forsake 1859

This holy monk' this abbot' him mene I 1860
His tonge out caught' and took' awey þe greyn
And he ȝaf' vp þe gost' ful softely
And whan þe abbot' hath þis wonder seyn
His salte teres striken doun as reyn 1864
And gruf' he fel a doun vnto þe grounde
And stille he lay as he had ben y-bounde 1866

The couent eek' lay on þe pauyment' 1867
wepyng' and herying' cristes moder deere
And after þat' þay rise and forþ þay went'
And took' away þis martir fro his beere /
In a tombe of' marble stoones cleere 1871
Enclosed þay þis litil body sweete
Ther he is now god leue vs for to meete 1873

O ȝonge hughe of' lyncoln slayn also 1874
wiþ cursed iewes as it is notable /
For it nys but a litel while ago
Pray eek' for vs we synful folk' vnstable
That' of' his mercy god so merciable 1878
On vs his grete mercy multiplie
For reuerence of' his modir marie Amen 1880

[*No break in the MS.*]

Whan sayd was þis miracle euery man 1881
As sober was þat' wonder was to se
Til þat' oure host' to iape bigan
And þan at erst/ he loked vpon me
And sayde þus what' man art' þou quod he 1885
Thou lokest' as þou woldest' fynde an hare
For euer vpon þe ground I se þe stare / 1887

Approche ner and loke merily [*leaf* 203, *back*] 1888
Now ware ȝou sires and let' þis man haue space
He in þe wast' is schape as wel as I
This were a popet' in an arm to embrace
For any wo*m*man smal and fair of' face / 1892
He semeth eluisch by his countenaunce
For vnto no wight' doth he daliaunce 1894

Say now som what' sins other folk' han said 1895
Telle vs a tale and þat of' mirthe anoon
host' quod I ne beþ nought' euel apayd
For other tale certes can I noon
But of' a rym I lerned ȝore agoon 1899
Ȝe þat' is good quod he now schul we heere
Som deynte þing' me þinketh by his cheere 1901

[*Break of* 1 *line in the MS.*]

[*No stanza-gaps are in the MS., and no lines are inset.*]

[*The First Fit.*]

LEsteneþ lordyngs. in good entent'
And I wol telle verrayment'
Of' myrthe and solas 1904
Of' a knyght' was fair and gent
In batail and in tornament
His name was sir Thopas 1907

I-bore he was in fer conntre
In Flaundres al byȝonde þe se
At' Poperyng' in þe place 1910
His fader was a man ful fre
And lord he was of' þat' contre
As it was goddes grace 1913

Sir Thopas wax a doughty swayn
whyt' was his face as payndemayn
His lippes reed as Rose / 1916
His rode is lik / scarlet' en grayn
And I ȝow telle in good certayn
He had a semly nose 1919

His heer his berd was lik/ safroun
That' to his girdil raught' a doun
His schoon of' Cordewane 1922
Of' Brigges were his hosen broun
His robe was of' Sicladoun
That' coste many a Iane [leaf 204] 1925

He couþe hunt' at' wilde deer
And ride on haukyng' for ryuer
  with gray goshauk' on honde 1928
Therto he was a good archeer
Of' wrastelyng' was noon his peer
  Ther eny Ram schal stonde / 1931

Ful many mayde bright' in bour
þay mourne for him p*ar*amour
  whan hem were bet' to slepe 1934
But' he was chast' and no lecchour
And sweet' as is þe brembre flour
  That' bereþ þe reede heepe / 1937

And so it fel vpon a day
For soþ as I ȝow telle may /
  Sir Thopas wold out' ryde 1940
he worth vpon his steede gray
And in his hond a launcegay
  A long' sword by his syde 1943

he priketh þurgh a fair forest/
Ther In is many a wilde best/
  ȝe boþe buk / and hare 1946
And as he prikeþ north and Est'
I tel it ȝow hy*m* had almest'
  Bityd a sory care 1949

Ther springen herbes greet' and smale
The licorys and þe Cetewale /
  And many a clow gilofre 1952
And notemuge to put' in ale
wheþir it be moist or stale
  Or for to lay in cofre 1955

The briddes synge it is no nay
The sp*er*hauk' and þe popiniay
That' ioye it was to heere 1958
The þrostilcok' maad eek' his lay
The woode dowue vpon þe spray
So song' ful lowde and cleere 1961

Sir Thopas fel in loue-longing'
whan that' he herde þe briddes synge [*leaf* 204, *back*]
And priked as he were wood 1964
His faire steede in his prikynge
So swette þat' men might' him wrynge
His sydes were al blood 1967

Sir Thopas eek' so wery was
For priking' on þe softe gras
So feers was his corrage 1970
That' doun he layd him in þe place
To make his steede som solace
And ȝaf' him good forage 1973

O seinte Mary benedicite
what' eylith þis loue at' me
To bynde me so sore 1976
My dremed al this night' p*ar* de
An elf' queen schal my lemman be
And slepe vnder my gore 1979

An Elf' queen wol I haue I-wis
For in this world no wo*m*man is
worthy to be my make 1982
In toune [*as part of l.* 1982]
Alle oþir wommen I forsake
And to an Elf' queen I me take
By dale and eek' by doune 1986

In to his sadil he clomb anoon
And priked ouer stile and stoon
  An elf' queen for to spye 1989
Til he so longe haþ ryden and goon
That' he fond in a priue woon
  The contre of' fairye 1992
¶ So wylde [*as part of l.* 1992]
For in þat' contre was þer noon ?
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
  Neither wif' ne childe [*as part of l.* 1994] 1996

Til þat þer cam a greet geaunt/
his name was sir Olifaunt'
  A p*er*ilous man of' dede 1999
he swar child by Termagaunt'
For if' þou prike out of' myn haunt'
  Anoon I slee þe 2002
with my mace [*as part of l.* 2002]
heer is þe queen of' fayerie
with harp. and lute and Symphonye
  dwellyng' in þis place [*as part of l.* 2005] 2006

The child sayd also mote I the [*leaf* 205]
To morwe wil I meete with þe
  whan I haue myn armure 2009
And ȝit I hope p*ar* ma fay
That' þou schalt' with þis launcegay
  Abyen it ful soure 2012
¶ þy mawe [*as part of l.* 2012]
Schal I persyn if' þat' I may
Er it be fully prime of' day
  For heer schalt' þou be slawe 2016

Sir thopas drough on bak' ful fast'
This geaunt' at' him stoones cast /
  Out' of' a fell staf' slynge 2019
But' faire eschapeþ child thopas
And al it' was þurgh goddis gras
  And þurgh his berynge / 2022

ȝet' lesteneth lordynges to my tale /
Merier þan þe nightyngale /
  I wol ȝow roune 2025
how s*ir* thopas wiþ sides smale /
Prikynge ouer hul and dale
  Is come ageyn to toune 2028

his mery men comaunded he
To make him boþe game and gle
  For needes most' he fight' 2031
with a geaunt' with heedes þre
For p*ar*amours and iolite
  Of' oon þat schon ful bright 2034

Do come he sayde my mynstrales
And gestours for to telle tales
  Anoon in myn armynge 2037
Of' Romaunces þat ben reales
Of' popes and of' Cardinales
  And eek' of' loue likynge 2040

Thay fet' him first' þe swete wyn
And made him eek' in a maselyn
  A real spicerye 2043
Of' gyngebred þat' was so fyn
And licorys and eek' comyn
  with sugre þat is trye / [*leaf* 205, *back*] 2046

He dede next' his white leere
Of' cloth of' lake whyt' and cleere
  A brech and eek' a schert' 2049
And next' his schert' an aketoun
And ouer þat' an haberioun
  For persyng' of' his hert' 2052

And ouer þat' a fyn hauberk'
was al I-wrought' of' Iewes werk'
  Ful strong' it' was of' plate 2055
And ouer þat' his cote-armour
As whyt' as is a lily flour
  In which he wold debate 2058

his scheld was al of' gold so red
And þer Inne was a bores heed
  A charbocle by his syde / 2061
And ther he swor on ale and bred
How þat' þe geaunt' schal be deed
  Bytyde what' bytyde / 2064

His iambeux were of' quirboily
His swerdes schethe of' yuory
  His helm of' latoun bright' 2067
His sadel was of' rowel boon
His bridel as þe sonne schon
  Or as þe moone light' 2070

his spere was of' Cipres
That' bodeth werre and no þing' pees
  The heed ful scharp I-grounde / 2073
His steede was al dappul gray
Hit goth an ambel in þe way /
  Ful softely and rounde 2076

¶ In londe [*In line* 2076]
lo lordes heer is a fyt
If ȝe wil eny more of it
To telle it wol I fonde 2080

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*The Second Fit.*]

NOw hold ȝour mouth for charite
Boþe knight and lady fre
And herkneþ to my spelle 2083
Of batail and of chiualry
And of ladys loue drewery [*leaf* 206]
Anoon I wol ȝow telle / 2086

Men speken of Romauns of pris
Of horn child and of ypotis
Of Beuys and sir Gy 2089
Of *sir* libeaux and pleyn dam*our*
But *sir* thopas bereþ þe flour
Of real Chiualry 2092

His goode steede he bistrood
And forth vpon his way he glood
As spark out of þe bronde 2095
Vpon his crest he bar a tour
And *þer* In stiked a lily flour
God schilde his corps fro schonde 2098

And for he was a knyȝt auntrous
He nolde slepen in noon hous
But liggen in his hood 2101
his brighte helm was his wonger
And by him baytith his destrer
Of herbes fyne and goode/ 2104

Himself' drank' water of' þe welle
As dede þe knight' of' pertinelle /
So worthy vnder wede 2107
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

NO mor of' þis for goddes dignite
Quod our hoste / for þou makest' me
So wery of' þy verrey lewednesse
That' al so wisly god my soule blesse / 2112
Myn eeres aken for þy drasty speche
Now such a rym þe deuel I byteche
This may wel be rym dogerel quoþ he
why so quod I why wilt' þou lette me 2116
More of' my tale þan anoþer man
Syn þat' it is þe beste rym þat' I can
By god quod he for pleinly at' o word
Þy drasty rymyng' is not' worth a tord 2120
Þou dost' nought' elles but' despendist' tyme
Sir at' o word þou schalt' no lenger ryme
let' se wher þou canst' tellen ought' in gest
Or telle in prose som what atte lest' [*leaf* 206, *back*] 2124
In which þer be so merthe or doctrine
Gladly quod I by goddes swete pyne /
I wol ȝow telle a litel þing' in prose
That' oughte like ȝow as I suppose / 2128
Or elles certes ȝe be to daungerous
It' is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it' told som tyme in sondry wise
Of' sondry folk' as I schal ȝow deuyse / 2132
As thus . ȝe woot' þat' euery eu*au*ngelist'
Þat' telleþ vs þe peyne of' Iħū crist'
Ne saith all*e* þing' as his felawes doþ
But' naþeles here sentence is al soþ 2136
And all*e* accorden as in here sentence
Al be þer in her tellyng' difference /

For some of hem sayn more and some lesse /
whan þay his pitous passioun expresse / 2140
I mene of mark mathew luk and Iohn
But doutelos her sentence is al oon
Therfor lordynges alle I ȝow biseche
If ȝow þink þat I varye as in my speche 2144
As þus þough þat I telle som what more
Of prouerbes þan I haue herd bifore
Comprehended in þis litel tretys here /
To enforcen with þeffect of my matiere 2148
And þough I not þe same wordes say
As ȝe haue herd / ȝit to ȝow alle I pray
Blameþ me nought for in my sentence
Schul ȝe no wher fynde difference 2152
Fro þe sentence of þis tretys lite
After þe which þis litil tale I wryte
And þerfor herkeneþ what I schal say
And let me tellen al my tale I pray 2156

[*Break of* 5 *lines in the MS.*]

[*There are no line-numbers or paragraph-breaks in the MS. Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept here, as they were in the Six-Text, to prevent slight differences in the Texts throwing out many lines.*]

[2157]

[*leaf* 207]

A ȝong' man called Melibeus mighty and riche bygat vpon his wif' þat' called was prudens. a doughter: which þat' called was Sophie //

[2158] Vpon a day byfel þat' for his desport' he is went' in to þe feldes him to / play. [2159] his wif' and his douȝter eek' haþ he laft' in-with his hous of' which þe dores were fast' I-schitte. [2160] þre of' his olde foos han it' espyed. and setten laddres to þe walles of' his hous and by þe wyndowes ben entred [2161] and beetyn his wyf' and woundid his douȝter wiþ fyue mortal woundes in fyue sondry places [2162] þat' is to sayn in here feet' in here hondes in here eeres in here nose and in here mouth and lafte her for deed and went' away

[2163] ¶ whan Melibeus retourned was in to his hous and seigh al þis meschief' he lik' a man mad rendyng' his cloþes gan wepe and crie.

[2164] Prudens his wyf' as ferforth as sche dorste bisouȝt' him of' his wepyng' to stynte / [2165] But not' for þi he gan to crie euer lenger þe more

[2166] ¶ this noble wyf' prudence remembred hire vpon þe sentens of' Ovide in his book' that' cleped is þe remedy of' loue / wher as he seiþ [2167] ¶ he is a fool þat' destourbeþ þe moder to wepe in þe deth of' hir childe til sche haue I-wept' hir fille as for a certeyn tyme [2168] and þan schal man doon his diligence as with amyable wordes hire to recomforte and praye hire of'

¶ Ouidius de remedio amoris

hire wepyng' to stinte [2169] ¶ For which resoun þis noble wif' prudens suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and *crie* / as for a certeyn space. [2170] and whan sche seigh hir tyme: sche sayd him in þis wise ¶ Allas my lord quod sche why make ȝe ȝoure self' for to be lik' a fool. [2171] For soþe it apperteyneþ not' to a wys man to make such sorwe. [2172] ȝoure douȝter wiþ þe grace of' god schal warischt' be and eschape. [2173] and al were it so þat sche right now were deed: ȝe ne oughte nouȝt' as for hir deþ ȝoure silf' destroye [2174] ¶ Senec saiþ. þe wise man schal not' take to gret' discomfort for þe deth of' his children: [2175] but certes he schulde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abydeþ þe deþ of' his owne *per*sone

[2176] ¶ This melibe*us* answerde anoon & sayde ¶ what' man quod he schuld of' his wepynge stynte *þat'* haþ a cause for to wepe [2177] ¶ Ihū *crist'* oure lord himself' wepte for þe deth of' laȝarus his frend [2178] ¶ Prudens answerde Certes wel I wot/ attemp*er*el wepyng' is no þing' defended to him *þat'* sorwful is. amonges folk' in sorwe. But' it is raþer graun*t*ed him to wepe / [2179] þe apostel poule vnto þe Romayns writeþ. A man schal reioyce with hem *þat'* maken ioye / And wepe with such folk' as wepen [2180] ¶ But' þoug̃ attemp*er*el [1] wepyng' be graunted: Outrageous wepynge certes is defended // [2181] Mesure of' wepynge be conserued. after þe lore of' *crist'* þat techeþ vs senec [2182] ¶ whan *þat'* þi frend is deed quod he: let' nought þin yen to moyste ben of' teres ne to moche drye ¶ Al þough the teeres come out' of' þine eyȝen: let' he not' falle [2183] ¶ And whan þou hast' forgon þy frend: do diligence to gete anoþ*er* frende ¶ And þis is more wisedom þan to wepe for þy frend which þat þou hast lorn. For þer in is no boote [2184] ¶ And *per*fore if' ȝe gouerne ȝow by sapience put away sorwe out' of' ȝoure hert [2185] ¶ Remembreth ȝow *þat'* Ihc' Sirac saiþ

¶ *Qualiter* ihc *christus* fleuit *propter* mortem lazari

A*postolus* ad ro*manos*

[1 *leaf* 207, *back*]

¶ A man þat is ioyous and glad in herte: it him conserveth florischinge in his age ¶ But soþly sorweful herte makeþ his boones drye [2186] ¶ he saiþ eek þus. þat sorwe in herte sleþ ful many a man [2187] ¶ Salamon saiþ þat right as motthes in schepes flees annoyeth þe clothes. and þe smale wormes to þe tre: Right / so annoyeþ sorwe to þe herte [2188] ¶ wherfore vs oughte as wel in þe deþ of oure children as in þe losse of oure goodes temporales haue pacience

[2189] ¶ Remembreth ȝow vpon þe pacien Iop ¶ whan he hadde lost his children and his temporal substance and in his body endured and receyued ful many a greuous tribulacioun: ȝit sayde he þus [2190] ¶ Oure lord it/ sent/ vnto me Oure lord it haþ raft fro me. Right so as oure lord wil: riȝt so be it doon ¶ I-blessed be þe name of oure lord [2191] To þese forsayde þinges answerith Melibeus vnto his wif Prudens Alle þine wordes ben soþ quod he and þerto profytable ¶ But soþly myn herte is so troubled wiþ þis sorwe: þat I noot/ what to doone [2192] ¶ Let calle quod prudence þy trewe frendes alle and þy linage whiche þat ben trewe & wise. telleth hem ȝoure greuaunce and herken what þay say in counseilynge. and ȝow gouerne after here sentence. [2193] ¶ Salomon saith ¶ werke al þi þing by counseil and þe þar neuer rewe

[2194] ¶ þan by þe counseil of his wyf prudens this melibeus let calle a gret congregacioun of peple [2195] as Surgiens. phisiciens olde and ȝonge and some of his olde enemyes recounsiled as by her semblaunt to his loue and to his grace. [2196] and þer wiþ al þer come some of his neighebours þat deden him reuerence more for drede þan for loue as happeþ ofte [2197] ¶ Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers and wise aduoketes lerned in þe lawe

[2198] ¶ And whan þese folk togidere assemblid were: This melibeus in sorwful wyse schewed hem his caas.

[2199] and by þe maner of his speche: it semed þat in [1]herte he bar a cruel Ire redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodeynly desirede þat þe werre schulde bygynne. [2200] but natheles ȝit axed he her counseil in þis matier. [2201] ¶ A Sirurgien by licens and assent of suche as were wyse vp ros and to melibeus sayde as ȝe may hiere

[2202] ¶ Sire quod he as to vs Sirurgiens appertieneth þat we do to euery wight þe beste þat we can wher as we ben withholde and to oure pacient þat we do no damage [2203] ¶ wherfore it happeþ many tyme and ofte þat whan tweye han euerich wounded oþer: oo. same surgien heleþ hem boþe. [2204] where vnto oure art it is not perteyned to norische werre ne parties to supporte: [2205] but certes as to warisching of ȝoure douȝter al be it so þat sche perilously be woundid: we schullen do so tentyf besynes fro day to nigh̃t þat with þe grace of god sche schal be hool and sound als soone as it is possible [2206] ¶ Almost right in þe same wise þe phisiciens answerden: saue þat þay sayden a fewe wordes more [2207] ¶ That ryght as maladies ben cured by her contraries: Right so schal men warissch werre by vengeaunce [2208] ¶ His neyheboures ful of enuye his feyned freendes þat semede recounsiled his flatereres [2209] maden semblaunt of wepyng and appaired and aggregged moche of þis matiere in preisyng gretly melibe of might. of power of Riches. and of frendes despisinge þe power of his aduersaries [2210] and sayden outerly þat he anoon schulde wreke him on his aduersaries be bygynnynge of werre

[2211] vp roos þanne an aduocate þat was wys. by leue and by counseil of oþere þat were wise and sayde / [2212] ¶ Lordynges. þe needes for whiche we ben assemblit in þis place is ful heuy þing and an heigh̃ matier [2213] by cause of þe wrong & of þe wikkednes þat haþ ben doon and eek of þe grete damages þat

in tyme comyng' ben possible to falle for þe same [2214] and eek' by cause of' þe grete richesse and power of' þe partes bothe [2215] for þe whiche resoun*s* it were a ful gret p*er*il to erren in these materes [2216] ¶ wherfore melibeus þis is oure sentence ¶ we counseile ȝow abouen all*e* þi*n*ges þat' riȝt anoon þou do diligence in kepyng' of' þy body in such a wyse þat þou ne wante noon espye ne wacche þy body for to saue [2217] ¶ And aft*er* þat' we counseile þ*a*t in þin hous þou sette suffica*u*nt garniso*u*n So þat' þay may as wel þy body as þin hous defende [2218] ¶ But certes for to moeue wer*r*e ne sodeynly for to do vengeance: we may not deme in so litel tyme þat' it were p*r*ofitable [2219] ¶ wherfore we axen leysir [1] and a space [. . . .] in þis caas to demen [2220] ¶ For þe comune prouerbe saiþ þis ¶ he þat' soone demeþ soone schal repente [2221] ¶ And eek' me*n* sayn þat þilke Iuge is wys þat soone vnderstondeþ a matier and Iuggeþ by leysir. [2222] ¶ For al be it so þat / alle taryinge is anoyful: algates it is no reproef' in ȝeuynge of' Iuggement. ne of' ve[*n*]ga*u*nce takyng' whan it is suffisa*u*nt and resonable [2223] and þat schewed oure lord ihū c*ri*st by ensample ¶ For whan þat þe wo*m*man þat was I-take in aduoutrie was brouȝt in his p*r*esence to knowen what' schulde be doon of' hir p*er*sone Al be it þat he wist hi*m* self' what' þat' he wolde answere: ȝit wolde he not answere sodeynly. but' he wolde haue deliberacio*u*n and in þe ground he*m* wrot twyes. [2224] and by þese causes we axe deliberacio*u*n. and we schul þanne by þe grace of' god counseile þe þing' þat' schal be profytable

[2225] ¶ Vpstarten þenne þe ȝonge folkes anoon at oones: and þe moste part' of' þat' companye han skorned þese olde wise men and bygonne to make noyse and sayden [2226] ¶ Right so as whil þat/ Iren is hoot men scholden smyte: Right' so schulde men wreke here wronges whil

[1 *leaf* 208, *back*]

þat þay ben freische and newe ¶ And with lowde vois þay cryde. werre. werre.

[2227] ¶ Vproos þo oon of þese olde wise and with his hond made co*un*tenaunce þat men schulde holde hem stille and ȝiuen him audience [2228] ¶ lordyngs quod he ther is ful many a ma*n* þ*at* crieth werre werre wot ful litel what werre amounteth. [2229] werre at his bygy*n*ny*n*g haþ so greet and entre and so large þat eu*er*y wigh̄t may entre whan him likeþ and lightly fynde werre [2230] ¶ But certes what ende schal falle þ*er*of: it is not lightly to knowe [2231] For soþly whan þat werre is oones bygonne: þer is ful many a child vnbore of his mooder þat schal sterue ȝong by cause of þilke werre or elles lyue in sorwe and deye in wrecchidnes [2232] ¶ & þerfore er þat eny werre be bygonne. men moste haue gret cou*n*seil and gret deliberacio*un*. [2233] ¶ And whan þis olde man wende to enforce his tale by reso*un*s wel neigh̄ all*e* at oones bygo*n*ne þay to rise for to breke his tale and beden him fulofte his wordes to abrigge. [2234] For soþly he þat precheþ to hem that liste not to heere his wordes his sermo*un* hem anoyeth [2235] ¶ For Ih*esus* Sirac saith þat wepyng in musik is a noyous þing. þis is to say ¶ As moche auayleþ to speke tofore folk/ to whiche his speche annoyeþ: as it is to synge byfore hem whiche þat wepith [2236] [1]¶ And whan þis wise man saugh̄ him wanted audience: al schamefast he sette him doun agayn [2237] ¶ For Salamo*n* saith. ther as þou may haue noon audience: enforce þe not to speke [2238] ¶ I se wel q*uo*d þis wise ma*n* þat þe comune prou*er*be is soþ ¶ That good counseil wantith whan it is most neede

[2239] ¶ ȝit hadde þis melibeus in his co*un*seil many folk þat priuely in his eere han co*un*seled hi*m* c*er*tein þinges and co*un*seled hi*m* þe contrarie in gen*er*al audience

[2240] ¶ whan melibeus hadde herd ȝet þe grettest

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p*ar*ty of þis co*un*seil were accorded þat þe schulde make werre. Anoon he consented to here co*un*seilyng and fully affermed here sentence [2241] ¶ Tha*n*ne dame Prudence whan þat sche saugh þat hir housbonde schop him to wreke him of his enemyes and to gynne werre: / Sche in ful humble wise whan sche saugh hire tyme sayde him þese wordes [2242] ¶ My lord quod sche I ȝow biseche as hertily as I dar and kan ne haste ȝow nought to faste and for all*e* guerdo*un*s as ȝeue me audience [2243] ¶ For Peres Alfons saith ¶ who þat doþ to þe ouþer good or harm: haste þe nought to quyten him. For in þis wise þy freend wil abyde: and þin enemy schal þe lenger lyue in drede [2244] ¶ The prou*er*be saiþ ¶ he hastith wel þat wisly can abyde and in wikked haste is no profyt

[2245] ¶ This melibeus answerde vn to his wyf prudens ¶ I purpose not quod he to werke by þy co*un*seil for many causes and reso*un*s ¶ For certes eu*er*y wight wolde holde me þanne a fool [2246] ¶ þis is to sayn ¶ If I for þy counseil wolde chau*n*ge þinges þat affermed ben by so many wise: [2247] I say þat all*e* wommen be wikked and noon good of hem alle ¶ For of a þousand men saiþ Salomo*n* I fond oon good man: But certes of alle wommen good wo*m*man fond I neuer noon [2248] ¶ And also certes if I gouernede me by þy counseil it schulde seme that I hadde ȝiuen to þe ouer me þe maistry and god forbeede er it so were [2249] ¶ For Ihc Syrac saiþ þat if a wif haue maistrie sche is contrarious to hir housbond [2250] ¶ and Salomon saith ¶ Neuer in þy lif to þy wyf ne to þy child ne to þy freend ne ȝeue no power ouer þiself ¶ For better it were· þat þy children axen of þy p*er*sone þinges þat been needful to hem þan þou se þiself in þe hondes of þy children [2251] ¶ And also if I wolde werke by þy counselynge certes it most som tyme be secre til it were tyme þat it moste be

knowe and þis ne may not' be [2252] [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . [2253] . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[2254] wha*n* dame Prudence ful debonerly and with gret pacience hadde herd al þat hir housbonde liked for to seye ¶ Than axed sche of' hi*m* licence [1]for to speke and sayde in þis wise [2255] ¶ My lord quod sche as to ȝoure firste reso*u*n certes it may lightly be answered. For I say it is no foly to chaunge counsel whan þe þing/ is chaungid. For elles wha*n* þe þing' semeþ o*per*wise þan it was biforn [2256] And moreouer I say þough þat' ȝe han sworn and I-hight to parforme ȝoure emprise And naþeles ȝe wayue to p*ar*forme þilke same emprise by iuste cause men schulde not say þerfore þat/ ȝe were a lyere ne forsworn [2257] For þe book/ seiþ þat' þe wise man makeþ no lesyng' whan he torneth his corrage to þe better [2258] ¶ And al be it so þat ȝoure emp*r*ise be establid and ordeyned by gret multitude of' poeple: ȝit thar ȝe not accomplise þilke same ordina*u*nce but ȝou like / [2259] For þe trouþe of' þing' and þe p*r*ofyt' ben rather founde in fewe folk' þat' ben wise and ful of' reso*u*n þan by gret multitude of' folk' þat' eu*er*y ma*n* crieth and clatereþ what' þat him likeþ soþely such multitude is not' honest' [2260] ¶ An to þe seco*un*de reso*un* wher as ȝe sayn þat all*e* wom*men* ben wikke: Saue ȝoure g*r*ace. Certis ȝe despise all*e* womme*n* in þis wise and þat all*e* despysith saiþ þe book / [2261] And senec saith who-so wil haue Sapience schal no man desprayse but' he schal gladly teche þe science þat' he can wiþoute p*r*esumpcio*un* of' pryde [2262] and suche þinges as he nought' can he schal not' ben aschamed to lerne hem and enquere of' lasse

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folk' þan himself' [2263] ¶ And sire þer haþ be ful many a good womman [. . . . . [2264] . . . . .] if' alle wommen hadde ben wikke [2265] after þat for þe grete bounte þat' is in wommen? Oure lord iħu crist/ whan he was risen fro deþ to lyue apperede raþer to a womman þan to his apostles. [2266] ¶ And þough þat' Salamon say he fond neuer good womman It' folwith nouȝt' þerfore þat' alle wommen ben wikke. [2267] For þough þat he fonde noone goode wommen certes many a noþer man haþ founden many a womman ful goode and trewe [2268] ¶ Or elles parauenture þentent of' Salamon was þis as in souereyn bounte. he fond no womman [2269] þis is to say þat' þer is no wiġht' þat haþ souerein bounte saue god aloone as he himself' recordeþ in his euaungelie. [2270] For þer nys no creature so good þat' him wantith som-what of' þe perfeccioun of' god þat is his makere [2271] ¶ ȝoure þridde resoun is þis. ȝe seyn. þat' if' ȝe gouerned ȝow by counsel of' me it schulde seme þat ȝe hadde yeue me the maystry and þe lordschipe ouer ȝoure persone. [2272] sire saue ȝoure grace it' is not' so. For if' so were þat no man schulde be counseiled but by hem þat hadde maystrie and lordschipe of' his persone? men wolde nought' be counseiled so ofte [2273] ¶ For soþly þilke man þat' axeth [1]counseil of' a purpos. ȝet' haþ he fre chois wheþer he wil werke by þat' purpos or noon [2274] ¶ And so to ȝoure ferþe resoun þer ȝe sayn þat the ianglerie of' wommen can hyde þinges þat' þey wot' not' of' as who saith þat' a womman can nought hyde þat' at' sche woot'? [2275] Sire þese wordes ben vnderstonde of' wommen þat' ben iangelers and wikke. [2276] of' whiche wommen men sayn þat' þre þinges dryuen a man out of' his oughne hous þat' is to say. smoke. droppyng' of' reyn and wikked wyfes. [2277] of'

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suche wo*m*men saiþ salo*mo*n þat' it were better to a man to dwelle i*n* desert þan with a wo*m*man þat' is riotous [2278] and sire by ȝoure leue þat am not I [2279] ¶ For ȝe han ful ofte assayed my grete scilence and my grete pacience and eek' how wel þat' I can hyde and hele þinges þat' ben secrely to hyde [2280] ¶ And soþly as to ȝoure fyfte resou*n* wher as ȝe sayn þat' in wikkede counseil wo*m*men venquisscheth me*n*. god wot þilke resoun stont' here in no stede / [2281] For vnderstondith now ȝe aȝein cou*n*seil to do wickidnes [2282] and if' ȝe wil wirke wickidnes and ȝoure wyf' restreyne þilke wicked p*ur*pos and ou*er*come ȝou by resoun and by good counseil: [2283] Certes ȝoure wyf' oweth raþ*er* be preised than y-blamed / [2284] ¶ Thus schulde ȝe vnderstonde þe philosopher þat seiþ in wicked cou*n*seil wo*m*men venquyschen her housbondes [2285] ¶ And þer as ȝe blame alle wymme*n* and here reso*un*s: I schal schewe by many resou*n*s and ensamples þat' many a wo*m*man hath ben ful good and ȝit been and here cou*n*seiles ful holsome and p*r*ofitable [2286] ¶ Eke some me*n* han sayd þat' þe cou*n*seilyng' of' wo*m*men is ouþ*er* to dere or to litel of' p*ris* [2287] But al be it so þat' ful many a wo*m*man is badde and hir counseil vile and not' worþ: ȝet' han men founde many a ful good wo*m*ma*n* and ful discret and wys in counseilyng' [2288] ¶ lo Iacob by cou*n*seil of' his moder Rebecca wan þe blessyng' of' his fader ysaak' and þe lordschipe of' alle his breþ*er*en [2289] ¶ Iudith by hire goode counseil delyu*er*ed þe Citee of' Bethulie in which sche dwellid out of' þe hous of' Olophern*us* þat had it byseged and wolde it al destroye [2290] ¶ Abigayl deliuered Nabal hir housbond fro Dauid þe king' þat' wolde haue I-slayn him and appesed þe Ire of' þe kyng' by hir witte and by hir good cou*n*seilynge [2291] ¶ Hester by good cou*n*seil enhaunsed gretly þe poeple of' god In þe regne of' assuer*us* þe kyng' [2292] and þe same bounte in good counseilyng' of' many

a good wo*m*man may men rede and telle [2293] And more ouer whan oure lord had creat ad*a*m oure forme fader? he sayde in þis wise [2294] ¶ Hit is not goode to be a man aloone. make we to him an help semblable to him self' [2295] ¶ here may ȝe se þat if' þat a wo*m*man were not [1]good and hir counseil good and profytable? [2296] oure lord god of' heuen wolde neither haue wrouȝt hem ne called hem help of' man but raþer confusioun to man [2297] ¶ And þer sayde oones a clerk' in tuo v*er*sus ¶ what is better than gold. Iasp*er*. And what' is better þan Iasper? wisedom. [2298] and what' is better than wisedom? wo*m*man. and what' is better than good wo*m*man? No þing [2299] ¶ And sire by many oþer resou*n*s may ȝe se þ*a*t many wo*m*men ben goode and [. . . *no gap in MS.*] p*r*ofitable [2300] and þ*er*fore if' ȝe wil truste to my cou*n*seil? I schal restore ȝou ȝoure douȝter hool and sound [2301] ¶ and eek' I wil doon ȝou so moche þat' ȝe schul haue hono*ur* in þis cause

[2302] ¶ whan Melibe had herd þese wordes of' his wif' prudens? he seide þus. [2303] ¶ I se wel þat' þe word of' Salomo*n* is soþ ¶ he seith þat' þe wordes þat ben spoken discretly by ordinau*n*ce been hony combes. For þay ȝeuen swetnes to þe soule. and holmes to þe body [2304] ¶ And wyf' bycause of' þy swete wordes and eek' for I haue assayed and p*r*oued þi grete sapiens & þi grete trouþe? I wil gou*er*ne me by þy counseil in all*e* þinges

[2305] ¶ Now sire quod dame prudens and syn ȝe vouchen sauf' to be gouerned by my counseilyng'? I wil enforme ȝou how ȝe schul gouerne ȝoure self' in chesyng' of' ȝoure counseil [2306] ¶ ȝe schul first/ in all*e* ȝoure werk*es* mekely biseche to þe hihe god þat' he wol be ȝour counseilo*ur* [2307] & schape ȝou to þat' entent þat' he ȝiue ȝou counseil and confort as taughte Toby his sone [2308] ¶ At' alle tymes þou schalt' blesse

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god and p*ray* him to dresse þy wayes. and loke þat alle þi counseiles be in hi*m* for eu*er*more [2309] ¶ Seint Iame eek saith ¶ If eny of 3ow haue neede of sapiens axe it of god. [2310] and aftirward þanne schul 3e take cou*n*seil in 3oure self. and examine wel 3oure þou3tes of suche þinges as 3ou þinkiþ þat is best for 3oure p*ro*fyt [2311] and þanne schul 3e dryue fro 3oure hertes þo þat ben contrarie to good counseil. [2312] þat is to say. Ire. coueytise. and hastynes

[2313] ¶ First he þat axeþ counseil of himself. certes he moste be wiþoute Ire. for many cause [2314] ¶ The first is þis ¶ He þat haþ gret Ire and wraþþe in himself. he weneth alwey he may do þing þat he may not doo [2315] ¶ And secoundly he þat is Irous and wroþ. he may not wel deme [2316] ¶ and he þat may not wel deme: may nought wel counseile [2317] ¶ The þridde is þis. þat he þa is Irous and wroth as saiþ Senec may not speke but blameful þi*nges* [2318] and with his vicious wordes he stireþ oþer folk to anger and to Ire [2319] ¶ And eek sire 3e moste dryue coueitise out of 3oure herte / [2320] ¶ For þapostil saith þat coueytise is roote of alle harmes. [2321] And trusteth wel þat a coueitous man ne can not deme ne þinke [1]but oonly to fulfille þe ende of his coueitise [2322] ¶ And certes þat may neuer ben accomplised ¶ For euer þe more abundaunce þat he hath of riches. þe more he desireth [2323] And sire 3e moste also dryue out of 3our herte hastynes. [2324] For certes 3e may nought deme for þe beste a sodein þou3t þat falleþ in 3oure herte ¶ But 3e moste auyse 3ou on it ful ofte [2325] ¶ For as 3e herde here biforn þe comune p*rouer*be is þis: þat he þat soone demeth soone repentith:

[2326] ¶ Sire 3e ben not alway in lik disposicioun [2327] For certis som þing þat som tyme semeþ to 3ow þat it is good for to doo: anoþer tyme it semeþ to 3ou þe contrarie

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[2328] whan ȝe han taken cou*n*seil in ȝoure seluen. and han demed by good deliberacio*u*n such þing' as ȝow semeþ best' [2329] ¶ þanne rede I ȝou þat ȝe kepe it secre. [2330] Bywreye nought ȝoure cou*n*seil to no p*er*sone but it so be þat ȝe wene sicurly that þurgh ȝoure bywreyinge ȝoure cōdicio*u*n schal be to ȝow þe more p*ro*fytable [2331] ¶ For Iħc Syrac saiþ ¶ Neiþer to þi foo ne to þi freend discouere not' þy secre ne þy foly [2332] ¶ For þey wil ȝiue ȝou audience and lokyng' and supportacio*u*n in þi p*re*sence and scorn in thin absence [2333] ¶ anoþ*er* clerk' saiþ þat' skarsly schalt' þou fynde eny p*er*sone þat may kepe cou*n*seil secreely [2334] ¶ The book' saith ¶ whil þou kepist' þi cou*n*sail in þin herte þou kepest' it in þi prisou*n* [2335] ¶ and whan þou bywreyest þi counseil to any wight? he holdeþ þe in his snare [2336] ¶ And þ*er*fore ȝow is better hyde ȝoure counseil in ȝoure herte þan prayen him to whom ȝe haue bywryed ȝoure co*u*nseil þat' he wol kepe it clos and stille [2337] ¶ For Seneca seith ¶ If' so be þat' þou ne maist' not þin owne cou*n*sel hyde? how darst' þou preven any oþer wiġht' þi cou*n*seil secreely to kepe? [2338] ¶ But naþeles if' þou wene securly þat' þy bywreying' of' þy counsel to a p*er*sone wol make þy condicio*u*n stonde in þe better plite? þa*n*ne schalt þou telle him þy counsel i*n* þis wise [2339] ¶ First' þou shalt' make no semblau*n*t wher þe were leuer werre or pees. or þis or þat. ne schewe him not' þi wille and þin entent'. [2340] For truste wel þat comunly þese cou*n*seilours ben flaterers [2341] and namely þe cou*n*selo*ur*s of' grete lordes [2342] ¶ For þay enforcen hem alway raþer to speke plesaunt wordes enclynyng' to þe lordes lust þan wordes þat been trewe and p*ro*fitable [2343] ¶ And þerfore men say þat þe riche man haþ selden good cou*n*seil. but if' he haue it of' him self' [2344] ¶ And aft*er* þat' þou schalt' consider þy frendes and þine enemyes. [2345] And as touching' þy frendes? þou schalt' con-

sidere which of' he*m* beþ most' faithful and most' wise and eldest' and most' approuyd in counsaylinge [2346] ¶ And of' hem schalt' þou axe þy counsail as þe caas [1]requireth

[2347] ¶ I say þat first ȝe schul clepe to ȝour counseil ȝoure frendes that ben trewe [2348] ¶ For Salomo*n* saiþ For right as þe hert of' a ma*n* delitith in sauour þat' is soote: Right' so. þe cou*n*seil of' trewe frendes ȝeueþ swetnes to þe soule [2349] ¶ he saith also ther may no þing' be likened to þe trewe freend [2350] ¶ For certes gold ne siluer beþ nought so moche worþ as þe goode wil of' a trewe freend. [2351] ¶ And eek he sayde þat a trewe frend is a strong' defens who þat it fyndeþ certes he fyndeþ a gret tresour [2352] ¶ þanne schul ȝe eek' considere if' þat ȝoure trewe frendes ben discrete and wyse For þe book saith. axe þi counseil alwey of' hem þat ben wyse. [2353] and by þis same resoun shul ȝe clepe to ȝoure counseil of' ȝoure frendes þat ben of' age suche as haue I-seye sightes and ben expert' in many þinges and ben approuyd in counseylinges [2354] ¶ For þe book' saith þat in olde men is þe sapience and in longe tyme þe prudence [2355] ¶ And tullius saiþ þat grete þinges ben not' ay accompliced by strengþe ne by delyuernes of' body: but' by good counseil by auctorite of' p*er*sones and by science. the whiche þre þinges ne been not' feble by age: but certis þay enforsen and encresen day by day [2356] and thanne schul ȝe kepe þis for a general reule ¶ First' schul ȝe clepe to ȝoure cou*n*seil a fewe of' ȝoure frendes þat' ben especial [2357] For Salomo*n* saiþ ¶ Many frendes haue þou but' among' a þousand chese þe oon to be þy counseilour. [2358] For al be it so þat þou first ne telle þy counseil but to a fewe: þou mayst' afterward telle it to mo folk if' it be neede [2359] But' loke alwey þ*at* þy counseilo*ur*s haue þilke þre condicio*un*s þat I haue sayd

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bifore þat is to say þat þay ben trewe and olde and of wys exp*er*iens [2360] ¶ And werke nouȝt alwey in euery neede by oon counseilour alloone ¶ For som tyme byhoueþ it be counseiled by many [2361] ¶ For Salo*mo*n saith ¶ Saluacio*u*n of þinges is wher as þere beþ many co*u*nseilo*urs*.

[2362] Now siþ þat I haue told ȝow of which folk ȝe schul be cou*n*seled ¶ Now wil I telle ȝow which counseil ȝe ought eschiewe. [2363] First ȝe schal espie þe counseil of fooles ¶ For Salomo*n* seiþ take no co*u*nseil of a fool For he ne can not counseile but after his oughne lust and his affecciou*n* [2364] ¶ The book seiþ þat þe p*ro*prete of a fool is þis he troweþ lightly harm of euery wight & lightly troweþ all*e* bounte in himself [2365] ¶ Thow schalt eschiewe eek þe counseil of all*e* flaterers suche as enforcen hem raþ*er*e to p*ra*yse ȝoure p*er*sone by flaterie þan for to telle ȝow þe soþfastnesse of þinges

[2366] ¶ wherfore Tullius saith Amonges all*e* pestilences þat [1]ben in frendschipe þat is þe grettest flaterie. ¶ And þ*er*fore is it more neede þat þou eschiewe and drede flaterers more þan eny oþ*er* peple [2367] ¶ The book saiþ. þou schalt raþer drede and flee fro þe swete wordes of flaterers. þen fro þe egre wordes of þy frend þat saiþ þe þi soþes [2368] ¶ Salamon saiþ þat þe wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacche in Innocentȝ [2369] ¶ He saiþ also. he þat spekeþ to his frend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce setteþ a nette byfore his feet to cacchen him [2370] and þ*er*fore saiþ Tullius ¶ Encline not þin eeres to flaterers ne tak no confort of þe wordes of flaterers [2371] ¶ And Catoun saiþ Auyse the wel and eschiewe wordes of swetnes and of plesaunce [2372] and eek þou schalt eschiewe þe counselyng of þin olde enemyes þat ben recounsiled. [2373] þe book saiþ. that wight retorneth soone in to þe

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grace of his olde enemyes [2374] ¶ And ysope saith. Ne truste not' to hem wiþ which þou hast' had som tyme werre or enmyte. ne telle not hem þy cou*n*seil [2375] And Seneca telleþ þe cause why it may not be saith he þat wher as a greet fuyr haþ longe tyme endured: þat þere ne leueþ som vapour of' hete [2376] ¶ And þerfore saith Salo*mo*n ¶ In þin olde enemy truste þou neuere [2377] ¶ For sicurly þough þin enemy be reco*n*siled and make þe cheer of' humilite and lowteþ to þe his heed: ne trist him neuer [2378] For certes he makiþ þilke feyned humilite more for his p*ro*fyt' þan for eny loue of' þi p*er*sone by cause he demyth to haue victorie ouer þi p*er*sone ¶ By such feyned countyna*u*nce the whiche victorie he might' nouȝt' haue by stryf' and werre [2379] ¶ And Petir Alfons saiþ ¶ Make no felaschipe with þine olde enemyes. for if' þou do hem bounte: þey wil p*er*uerten it in to wikkednes [2380] & eek' þou most' eschiewe þe counseilynge of' hem þat' ben þy s*er*ua*u*ntȝ and beren þe gret' reu*er*ence. For p*ar* auenture þai say it' more for drede þan for loue [2381] And þ*er*fore saith a philosophre in þis wise ¶ Ther is no wight' p*ar*fytly trewe to him þat' he to sore dredeth [2382] ¶ And Tullius saith ¶ þer is no wight' so gret of' eny emp*er*our þat onge may endure but' if' he haue more loue of' þe peple than drede [2383] ¶ Thow also eschiewe þe counseil of' folk' þat' ben dronkelewe For þay ne can no cou*n*sel hyde [2384] ¶ For Salo*mo*n saith ¶ Ther regneþ no priuete þer as is dronkenesse [2385] ¶ ȝe schul also haue in suspect' þe counseil of' such folk' as co*u*nseileþ ȝou oon þing' p*ri*uely and counseile ȝow þe contrarie openly [2386] ¶ For Cassiodorie saith it is a maner sleighte to hindre whan he schewiþ to doon oon þing' openly and werkith priuely þe contrarie. [2387] ¶ þou schalt' also [1]eschiewe þe counseil of' wikked folkes ¶ For þe book' saith. ¶ The counselyng' of' wikked folk' is alway ful

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of' fraude [2388] ¶ and Dauid saith ¶ Blisful is þat man þat' haþ not' folwed þe counseilyng' of' wikked men or schrewes [2389] ¶ Thow schalt also eschiewe þe counseilynge of' ȝonge folkes for here counseil is nought/ rype

[2390] ¶ Now sire syn I haue schewed ȝou of' what' folk' ȝe schul take ȝoure counsail and of' whiche folk' ȝe schullen folwe þe counseil [2391] ¶ Now schal I teche ȝow how ȝe schul examyne ȝoure counseil after þe doctrine of' tullius [2392] ¶ In the examynyng' of ȝoure counseiloures: ȝe schul considre many þinges [2393] ¶ Al-thir first' ȝe schul considre þat in þilke þing' that þou proposist' and vp what' þing' þou wilt' haue counseil that verray trouthe be sayd and considerid. þis is to sayn. telle trewely þy tale [2394] ¶ For he þat' saith fals may not' wel be counseled in þat cas of' which he lyeth [2395] ¶ And after þis þou schalt considere the þinges þat' accorden to þat' purpos. for to do by þy counseil if' resoun accorde þer to [2396] ¶ and eek' if' þy might' may accorde þer to. and if' þe more part and þe better part of' þy counseilours accorde þer-to or noon [2397] ¶ Thanne schalt' þou considere what' þing' schal folwe of' þat' counsailynge. as hate. pees. werre. grace. profyt/. or damage and many oþer þinges [2398] ¶ And in alle þese þinges þou schalt' chese þe beste and weyue alle oþer þinges [2399] þanne schalt' þou considre of' what roote engendred is þy matier of' þy counseil and what fruyt' may conserue and engendre / [2400] ¶ Thow schalt also consider alle þese causes from whens þai ben sprongen. / [2401] And whan ȝe haue examined ȝoure counseil as I haue said and which party is þe better and more profitable and han approued by many wise folkes and olde: [2402] Than schalt' thow considre if' þou maist' performe it and make of' it a good ende [2403] ¶ For resoun wol noughť' þat' any man schuld bygynne a thing': but' if' he mighte parforme it and make þer-of' a good ende. [2404] ne no wighť'

schulde take vpon him so heuy a charge þat' he mighte not' bere it [2405] ¶ For þe prouerbe seiþ ¶ He þat' moche embrasith destroyeþ litel [2406] ¶ And Catoun seiþ Assay to do such þing' as þou hast' power to doon. lest' þat þy charge oppresse þe so sore. þat' þe bihoue to wayue þing þat' þou hast' bygonne [2407] ¶ And if' so be þat' þou be in doubte [1] wher þou maist' parforme a þing' or noon chese rather to suffre þan bygynne [2408] ¶ And petre alfons saith If' þou hast might to doon a þing' of' which þou most' repente it' is better nay þan ȝee / [2409] þis is to sayn þat þe is better holde þy tongue stille þan to speke [2410] ¶ Than may ȝe vnderstonde by strenger resouns. þat' if' þou hast power to parforme a werk' of' which þou schalt' repente: þanne is it better þat' þou suffre þan bigynne. [2411] wel seyn þay þat' defenden euery wight' to assaie þing' of' which he is in doute wheþir he may parforme it or noon [2412] ¶ And after whan ȝe han examyned ȝoure counseil as I haue sayd biforn and knowen wel ȝe may parforme ȝoure emprise: conferme it þanne sadly til it be at an ende

[2413] ¶ Now is it tyme and resoun þat' I schewe ȝow whanne and wherfore þat ȝe may chaunge ȝoure counseil wiþouten reproef' / [2414] ¶ Sothly a man may chaunge his purpos and his counseil if' þe cause cesseþ or whan a newe cause bytydeþ [2415] ¶ For þe lawe seith ¶ vpon þinges þat' newely bityde þ bihoueþ newe counseil. [2416] and Seneca seith ¶ If' þy counseil be comen to þe eeres of' þin enemy: chaunge þy counsail [2417] ¶ Thow maist/ also chaunge þy counseil if' so be þat' þou fynde þat' by errour or by oþer processe harm or damage may bytyde [2418] ¶ Also þou chaunge þy counseil if' þay be dishonest' or elles comuneth of' dishoneste. [2419] For þe lawes sayn ¶ That' alle þe hestes þat' ben dishoneste ben of' no valieu

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[2420] and eek' if' it so be þat' it be impossible. or may not' goodly be p*ar*formed or kept'

[2421] and take þis for a general reule ¶ That' eu*er*y counseil þat' is affermed or strengþed so strongly þat' it may not be chaunged for no condicio*un* þat' may bitide ¶ I say þat þilke counseil is wikked

[2422] ¶ þis melibeus whan he had herd þe doctrine of' his wyf' dame prudens answerde in þis wise [2423] ¶ Dame quod he ȝit as in to þis tyme ȝe han wel and couenably taught' me as in general how I schal gouerne me in chesynge and in wiþholdynge of' my counseiloures [2424] ¶ But' now wold I fayn ȝe wolde condescende as in especial [2425] & telleþ me what' semeþ or how likeþ ȝow by oure counseiloures þat' we han chosen in oure p*re*sent neede

[2426] ¶ My lord quod sche I byseke ȝow in al humblesce þat' ȝe wil not' wilfully repplye aȝeinst' my reso*un*s ne distempre ȝoure herte þough I say or speke þing' þat' ȝow displesith [2427] ¶ For god woot' þat' as in myn entent' I speke it for ȝoure beste. for ȝoure hono*ur*. and for ȝour [1]p*ro*fyt' eek [2428] ¶ And soþly I hope þat ȝour benignite wol take it in to pacience [2429] ¶ For trusteþ me wel quod sche þat' ȝoure cou*n*seil as in þis caas ne schulde not as for to speke p*ro*purly be called a counseilyng': but / a mocioun or a moeuynge of' foly [2430] in which counseil ȝe han erred in many a sondry wise

[2431] ¶ First and forward ȝe han erred in þe gaderyng' of' ȝoure cou*n*seilours [2432] For ȝe schulde first' han cleped a fewe folkes [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] if' it hadde be neede [2433] ¶ But' certes ȝe han sodeinly cleped to ȝour counseil a gret' multitude of poeple ful cha[r]geous and ful anoyous for to hiere [2434] ¶ Also ȝe han erred for þer as ȝe schulde oonly haue clepid to ȝoure counseil ȝoure trewe frendes olde and wise: [2435] ȝe haue I-cleped straunge folk' ȝonge folk'. false flatereres and enemyes

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reconsiled and folk' þat' doon ȝow reuerence wiþoute loue [2436] ¶ Eke also ȝe han erred: For ȝe han brouȝt' with ȝow to ȝoure cou*n*seil. Ire. Coueitise and Hastynes. [2437] þe whiche þre þinges ben contrarious to euery cou*n*sail honest' and p*ro*fitable [2438] ¶ The whiche þre þinges ȝe haue nought' annentissched or destroyed neyþer in ȝoure self' ne in ȝoure counseiloures as ȝe oughte [2439] ¶ Also ȝe haue erred. For ȝe haue schewed to ȝoure co*un*seilours ȝoure talent and ȝoure affecciou*n* to make werre and for to doon vengeau*n*ce anoon [2440] ¶ þay han espyed by ȝoure wordes to what þinge ȝe ben enclined [2441] and þerfore haue þay counseiled ȝow rather to ȝoure talent þan to ȝoure profyt [2442] ¶ ȝe haue erred also: For it semeþ þat' ȝow sufficeþ to haue been cou*n*seiled by þese cou*n*seilours only and wiþ litel auys [2443] wher-as in so gret' and so heigh a neede it hadde be necessarious mo cou*n*seilours and more deliberacio*un* to p*ar*forme ȝoure emp*ri*se [2444] ȝe have erred also ¶ For [. . . . . [2445] . . . . . *no gap*] ȝe haue maked no diuisiou*n* bytwixe ȝoure counsailours þis is to seyn bitwix ȝour*e* frendes and ȝoure feyned counseilours. [2446] ne ȝe ne haue nought I-knowe þe wille of' ȝoure frendes olde and wise. [2447] But ȝe haue cast all*e* here wordes in an hochepoche / and enclyned ȝoure herte to þe more part and to þe gretter nombr*e* and þere be ȝe condescendid [2448] ¶ And syn ȝe wot wel me*n* schal alway fynde a gretter nombre of' fooles þan of' wyse me*n*: [2449] and þerfore þe counsailes þat ben at congregacio*un*s and multitudes of' folk'. þer as men taken more reward to þe [1]nombre þan to þe sapience of' p*er*sones. [2450] ȝe se wel þat' in suche cou*n*seilynges fooles haue maystrie [2451] ¶ Melibeus answerde agayn and sayde ¶ I graunte wel þat' I haue erred: [2452] But' þ*er*e as þou hast' told me toforn þat' he is nought' to blame þ*at*' chau*n*geþ his coun-

seilours in certeyn caas and for certeyn iuste causes [2453] ¶ I am al redy to chaunge my co*un*seilours right' as þou wilt' deuyse [2454] ¶ The p*ro*uerbe saith þat' for to do synne is mannysch. But/ certes for to p*er*seuere longe in synne is werk' of' þe deuyl

[2455] ¶ To þis sentence anoon answerde dame prudens and saide [2456] ¶ Examineth q*uo*d sche ȝoure counsail and let' vs se which of' hem haþ spoke most' resonably and taught' ȝou best' cou*n*sail [2457] And for as moche as þe examinacio*un* is necessarie: let' vs byginne at' þe Surgiens and at' þe phisiciens þat first' speken in þis matiere [2458] ¶ I say ȝou þat' þe surgiens and þe physiciens han sayd ȝow in ȝoure counseil discretly as hem ought [2459] and in here speche sayden ful wisely þat' to þe office of' hem appendith to doon to eu*er*y wight' honour and p*ro*fyt'. and no wiȝt to annoye [2460] and after here craft' to do gret diligence vn to þe cure of' hem which þat' þay haue in here gouernaunce [2461] And sire right' as þay answerde wisely and discretly: [2462] Right so rede I þat' þay be heihly and soueraignly guerdoned for here noble speche / [2463] and eek' for þey schullen do þe more ententyf' besynes in þe curyng' of' ȝoure douȝt*er* dere [2464] ¶ For al be it so þat' þai be ȝoure frendes: þ*er*fore schul ȝe nought suffre þat' þay schul s*er*ue ȝow for nouȝt' / [2465] But' ȝe oughte þe raþere to guerdoune hem and schewe he*m* ȝoure largesse [2466] ¶ & as touchynge þe p*ro*posicio*un*s whiche þe phisiciens han schewed ȝou in þis caas þis is to sayn [2467] þat' in maladyes oon contrarie is warisshed by anoþer contrarie. [2468] I wolde fayn knowe þilke text' and how þay vnderstonde it and what is ȝoure entente [2469] ¶ Certes quod Melibeus vnderstonden it is in þis wise [2470] þat' right' as þay han do me a contrarie: right so schold I do hem anoþ*er* [2471] ¶ For right' as þai han venged he*m* on me and doon me wrong': Right' so schal I venge me vp on hem

and doon hem wrong' [2472] and þanne haue I cured oon contrarie by anoþ*er*

[2473] ¶ lo lo q*uo*d Dame prudence how lightly is eu*er*y man enclyned to his oughne plesaunce and to his oughne desir [2474] ¶ Certes quod sche þe wordes of' þe phisiciens [1] ne schulde nouȝt' haue ben vnderstonde sone in þat wise [2475] ¶ For certes wikkednesse is no contrarie to wickednesse. ne venga*u*ns to vengeaunce. ne wrong' to wrong': but' þai ben semblable [2476] And þ*er*fore on vengeaunce is nouȝt' warisshed by anoþ*er* vengeaunce. ne oon wrong' by anoþ*er* wrong'. [2477] but' eu*er*ych of' hem encreseth and engreggith oþer [2478] ¶ But certes þe wordes of' þe phisiciens schul ben vnderstonde in þis wise. [2479] For good and wikkednesse ben tuo contraries. and pees and werre. vengeaunce & sufferaunce. Discord and accord and many oþer þinges [2480] ¶ but certes wikkednes schal be warrisshed by goodnesse. Discord by accord. werre by pees and so forth of' oþer þinges [2481] ¶ And her-to accordith seint paul þe apostil in many places [2482] ¶ He saith. ne ȝeldith nouȝt' harm for harm. ne wikked speche for wikked speche [2483] ¶ But' do wel to him þat doþ þe harm and blesse him that' doþ þe harm [2484] and in many oþer places he amonesteth pees and accord [2485] ¶ But now wil I speke to ȝow of' þe counseil which was ȝiue to ȝow by þe men of' lawe & þe wise folk*es* [2486] þat' sayde all*e* by oon accord as ȝe haue herd byfore [2487] That' ouer alle þinges ȝe schal do ȝoure diligence to kepe ȝoure p*er*sone and to warmstore ȝoure hous. [2488] and seyden also þat' in þis ȝow aughte for to wirche ful auysily and with gret' deliberacio*u*n. [2489] ¶ And sire as to þe firste poynt' þat' touched to þe kepinge of' ȝoure p*er*sone: [2490] ȝe schul vnderstonde. þat' he þat' haþ werre: schal euermore deuoutly and mekely p*ra*yen biforn alle þinges [2491] þat' Ihū c*ri*st' wil of' his mercy

haue him in his protecciou*n* and ben his souerayn helpyng' at' his neede / [2492] ¶ For certes in þis world þer nys no wight' þat' may be counseiled or kept' sufficaun[t]ly wiþ-oute þe kepinge of' oure lord ihū *crist'* [2493] ¶ To þis sentence accordeþ þe pr*o*phete Dauid þ*at'* seith [2494] ¶ If' god ne kepe not' þe citee. in ydel wakith he þat kepith hit [2495] ¶ Now sire þanne schul ȝe co*m*mitte þe keping' of' ȝoure p*er*sone to ȝoure trewe frendes þat' ben approued and y-knowe [2496] and of' hem schul ȝe axen help ȝoure p*er*sone to kepe ¶ For Cato*un* saith ¶ If' þou haue neede of' help: axe it of' þy freendes. [2497] For þer is noon so good a phisicien at' neede: as is a trewe frend. [2498] ¶ And after þis: þan schal ȝe kepe ȝou fro all*e* straunge folk*es* and fro lyeres and haue alway in suspect/ here compaignye [2499] ¶ For Pieres alfons saith ¶ Ne take no compaignie by the [1]way of' a st*ra*unge man. but/ so be þat þou knowe him of' a lenger tyme [2500] And if' so be he falle in to þy compaignye p*ar* auenture wiþouten þin assent': [2501] enquere þanne as subtilly as þou maist' of' his conuersaciou*n* and of' his lyf' bifore and feyne þy way and say þat' þou wilt' go þider as þou wolt' nought' goon [2502] ¶ And if' he bere a spere ¶ hold þe on the right' syde ¶ And if' he bere a swerd: holde þe on þe lyft' syde. [2503] and so after þis. þanne schul ȝe kepe ȝou wisely from al such peple as I haue sayd bifore / and hem and here cou*n*seil eschiewe [2504] ¶ And after þis. þanne schul ȝe kepe ȝow in such mane*re* [2505] þat' for eny presumpciou*n* of' ȝoure strengþe þat ȝe despise not' þe might' of' ȝoure adu*er*sarie so lite þat' ȝe lete þe kepinge of' ȝoure p*er*sone for ȝoure p*re*sumpciou*n*. [2506] For eny wis man dredeþ his enemy [2507] ¶ And Salo*mon* saith ¶ weleful is he þat' of' alle haþ drede. [2508] For certes he þat' þurgh hardynes of' his herte and þurgh þe hardinesse of' himself'. haþ to gret' presumpciou*n*: him schal euyl bitide [2509] ¶ þanne

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schal ȝe euermore counterwayte enbusshementȝ and alle espiaille [2510] ¶ For Senec saith þat þe wise man þat dredip harmes / eschiewith harmes. [2511] ne he ne fallip in to noone perils þat perils eschiewep [2512] ¶ And al be it so þat þe seme þat þou art in sikur place: ȝit schaltow alway do þy diligence in kepyng of þy persone [2513] ¶ This is to say ¶ Be not necgligent to kepe þy persone nought oonly for þy gretteste enemyes: but fro þy lest enemyes [2514] ¶ Senec saith ¶ A man þat is wel auysed: he dredip his lest enemy [2515] ¶ Ovide seip þat þe litel wesil wol sle þe grete bole and þe wilde hert. [2516] ¶ And þe book saip. a litel þorn wol prikke a þing ful sore. ¶ And an hound wol holde þe wilde boore [2517] ¶ But naþeles I say not þat ȝe schul be so moche a coward þat ȝe doute where is no neede or drede [2518] ¶ þe book saip þat som folk haue gret lust to disceyue ¶ but ȝit þay dreden hem to be deceyued [2519] ¶ ȝet schal ȝe drede to ben empoisoned ¶ And kepe þe fro þe companye of scorners [2520] For þe book saith with scorners make no compaignye but flee hem and here wordes as venym

[2521] ¶ Now as to þe secounde poynt where as ȝoure wise counseilours warnede ȝow to warmstore ȝoure hous with gret diligence: [2522] I wolde fayn wite [1]how þat ȝe vnderstoode þilke wordes what is ȝoure sentence

[2523] ¶ Melibeus answerde and saide ¶ Certes I vnderstonde it in þis wise þat I schal warmstore myn hous with toures suche as han castiles and oþer maner edifices and armure and artilries [2524] by suche þinges I may my persone & myn hous so kepen and edifien and defenden þat myn enemyes schul be in drede myn hous to approche

[2525] ¶ To þis sentence answerde dame prudence ¶ warmstorynge quod sche of heihe toures and grete edifices [. . . . . [2526] . . . . . *no gap*] wiþ grete

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costages and gret trauaile and whan þat' þay ben accomplised ȝit' beþ þay nouȝt' worth a straw but' if' þey be defended by trewe frendes þat beþ olde and wise [2527] ¶ And vnderstondeþ þat' þe grettest' strength or garnisoun that þe riche man may haue as wel to kepe his p*er*sone as his goodes is [2528] þat' he be biloued wiþ his subgites and wiþ his neighebours [2529] ¶ For þus saith tulli*us* ¶ That þer is a man*er* garniso*un* þ*at'* no man may venquisshe ne discomfite and þ*at'* is [2530] a lord to be biloued with his citeȝeins and of' his peple

[2531] ¶ Now þa*n*ne as to ȝoure þridde poynt' where as ȝoure olde and wyse counseillo*ur*s sayde. ȝe oughte nought' sodeinly ne hastily procede in þis neede. [2532] but' þat' ȝe oughte purueyen ȝow and apparaile ȝow in þis caas wiþ greet diligence and gret' deliberacio*un*: [2533] trewely I trowe þat' þay sayden soþ and right' wisely [2534] ¶ For Tullius saith ¶ In eu*er*y nede er þou bigynne it/ apparaile þe wiþ gret' diligence [2535] ¶ Thanne say I þat' in vengeance takinge in werre in bataile and in warmstoringe of' þin hous [2536] er þou bygynne I rede þat' þou apparaille þe þ*er*to and do it with gret' deliberacio*un*. [2537] For tullius saith ¶ That' long' apparaylyng' byforе þe bataille: makeþ schort' victorie [2538] ¶ And Cassidorus saiþ ¶ The garniso*un* is strenger whan it is long' tyme auysed

[2539] ¶ But' now let vs speke of' þe counseil þat' was accorded by ȝoure neighebours suche as doon ȝou reu*er*ence wiþoute loue. [2540] ¶ ȝoure olde enemyes recounsiled [2541] þat' cou*n*seile ȝow certeyn þinges pryuely and openly counseile ȝow þe contrarie [2542] ¶ þe ȝonge also þat counsaile ȝow to make werre and venge ȝow anoon [2543] ¶ And certes sire as I haue sayd byforn ȝe haue gretly erred to haue cle[1]ped such maner folk' to ȝoure counseil [2544] whiche be now repreued by þe resouns byforе sayd [2545] ¶ But naþeles let' vs now descende to

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þe purpose special ¶ ȝe schul first' p*ro*cede after þe doct*ri*ne of' Tullius [2546] ¶ Certes þe trouþe of' þis or þis counseil nedeþ nought' diligently enquere [2547] For it' is wel wist' whiche it ben þat' doon to ȝow þis trespas and vilonye [2548] & how many trespasoures and in what maner þay han to ȝow doon al þis wrong' and al þis vilonye [2549] ¶ And after þat schul ȝe examyne þe secounde condicio*un* which Tulli*us* addiþ þer to in þis matier [2550] ¶ Tullius put a þing' which þat he clepeth couetynge. þis is to sayn [2551] who ben þay and whiche ben þay and how many þat consentid to þis matiere and to þy counsail in þy wilfulnesse to do hasty vengeaunces [2552] & let' vs considere also who ben þo and how many ben þo [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' ben counseilo*ur*s to ȝoure adu*er*saries. [2553] and certes as to þe first poynt it' is wel knowen whiche folk' ben þay þat consentid to ȝoure first/ wilfulnes. [2554] For trewly all*e* þo þat' counsailled ȝow to make sodeyn werre beþ nouȝt' ȝoure frendes [2555] ¶ let' vs considre whiche ben þo þat' ȝe holde so gretly ȝoure frendes as to ȝoure p*er*sone [2556] ¶ For al be it' so þat' ȝe be mighty and riche: certes ȝe been alloone. [2557] for certes ȝe haue no childe but' a douȝter. [2558] ne ȝe haue no breþeren ne cosins g*er*mayns ne noon oþer neigh kynrede / [2559] wherfore þat' ȝoure enemyes for drede schulden stynte for to plede wiþ ȝou and stryue ȝoure p*er*sone [2560] ¶ ȝe knowe also þat' ȝoure richesses mooten in diuers p*ar*ties be dep*ar*ted. [2561] and whan eu*er*y wight' haþ his part': þay wol take but' litel reward to venge þy deth [2562] ¶ But' þyne enemyes ben þre and haue many children breþeren. cosynes and oþ*er*e neigh kynrede. [2563] and þough it so were ȝe hadde slayn of' hem tuo or thre: ȝet' dwellen þer*e* ynowe to wreke here deth and sle þi p*er*sone [2564] ¶ And þough so were þat' ȝoure kynrede were more sekir and stedefast' þan

þe kynrede of' 3oure adu*er*saries? [2565] 3it' naþeles 3oure kynrede nis but' litel kinrede and litel sib to 3ow [2566] and þe kyn of' 3oure enemyes ben neigh sibbe to hem. and certes as in þat' here condicioun is bet' þan 3oures [2567] ¶ þanne let' vs considere also if' þe counseilynge of' hem *þat'* counseiled 3ow to take sodein vengeance wheþir it accorde to reso*u*n [2568] & certes [1]3e knowe wel nay [2569] ¶ For as by right' and reso*u*n þer may no man take vengeaunce vpon no wight' but' þe Iugge þat/ haþ iurediccioun of' it' [2570] whan it is y-*gra*unted him to take þilke vengeaunce hastily or attemp*er*elly as þe lawe requireth. [2571] and 3it moreouer of' þilke word þat' Tullius clepith *con*sentynge [2572] þou schalt considre if' þy might' and þy power may consente and suffice to þy wilfulnes and to þy counseilo*ur*s. [2573] and certes þou maist/ wel say þat' nay / [2574] For sicurly as for to speke p*ro*perly we may doo no þing' but' oonly oon þing/ which we may do rightfully [2575] ¶ And certes rightfully may 3e take no vengeance as of' 3our*e* owne auctorite [2576] ¶ Than may 3e se þat' 3oure power consentith not' ne accordith not' wiþ 3oure wilfulnesse [2577] ¶ let' vs now examyne þe þridde poynt þat' Tulli*us* clepeþ consequente. [2578] þou schalt' vnderstonde þat' þe vengeance þat' þou p*ur*posiddest' for to take is consequent'. [2579] and þer of' folweþ anoþ*er* vengeaunce. p*er*il and werre and oþer damages wiþoute nombr*e* of' whiche we be not' war as at þis tyme [2580] ¶ And as touching' þe fourþe poynt that' tullius clepeþ engendrynge? [2581] þou schalt' consid*re* þat' þis wrong' which þat' is doon to þe is engendred of' þe hate of' þin enemyes [2582] and of' þe vengeaunce takinge vp þat' wolde engendre anoþer vengeaunce & moche sorwe and wastyng' of' riches as I sayde

[2583] ¶ Now sire as to þe poynt' þat' Tullius clepith causes whiche þat' þe laste poynt' [2584] þou

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schalt' vnderstonde þat' þe wrong' þat' þou hast receyued haþ certeyn causes [2585] whiche þat' clerkes calle Orience and Officience. and causa longinqua. and causa *pro*pinqua. þis is to say. þe fer cause. and þe neigh cause. [2586] for þe fer cause is almighty god þat is cause of' alle þing*es*. [2587] þe nere cause is þe þre enemyes. [2588] þe cause accidental was hate. [2589] þe causes materiales been þe fyue woundes of' þy doughter. [2590] the cause formal is þe maner of' here werkyng' þat' brought' in laddres and clombe i*n* at' þin wyndowes. [2591] þe cause final was for to sle þy doughter hit' letted nouȝt' in as moche as w*as* in hem [2592] ¶ But for to speke of' þe fer cause as to what' ende þay schal come or what schal finally betyde of' hem in þis cause. can I not deme but by comittyng' and by supposyng'. [2593] For we schul suppose þ*at*' þay schul come to a wikked ende [2594] by cause þat þe book' of' degrees saith ¶ Seelden or wiþ gret' peyne ben causes I-brought' to [1]a good ende. whan þay ben euyl bygonne

[2595] Now sire if' men wolde axe me why þat' ȝe suffrede men to do ȝow þis wrong' and vilonye? Certes I can not' wel answere as for no soþfastnes [2596] For þe apostil saith. þat' þe sciences and þe Iuggements of' oure lord god almyghty ben ful deepe [2597] ¶ Ther may no ma*n* comprehende ne serchen hem sufficiauntly [2598] ¶ Natheles by certeyn p*re*sumpcio*u*ns and coniectinges I holde and bilieue [2599] þat' god which þat' is ful of' iustice and of' rightwisnesse haþ suffred þis to betyde by iuste cause resonable

[2600] ¶ Thy name Melibe is to say a man þat' drynkeþ hony. [2601] þou hast' y-dronke so moche hony of' sweete temp*er*el richesses and delices and hon-o*ur*s of' þis world [2602] þat' þou art' dronke and hast forȝete Ihū c*rist*' þy creatour. [2603] þou hast' not' doon him such hono*ur* and reuerence as þe oughte to doone. [2604] ne þou hast' nouȝt' wel taken keep to

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þe wordes of' Ovide þat' saith [2605] ¶ vnder þe hony of' þy goodes of' þy body is hid þe venym þat' sleeþ þi soule [2606] ¶ And Salomon saith ¶ If' þou haue fouunde hony. ete of' it þat' sufficeþ. [2607] For if' þou ete of' it out' of' mesure: þou schalt' spewe and be nedy and pouere. [2608] and perauenture crist' haþ þe in despit'. and hath torned away fro þe his face and his eeres of' misericorde [2609] ¶ And also he haþ suffred þat' þou hast' ben punysshed in þe maner þat' þou hast I-trespassed [2610] ¶ Thou hast' doon synne aȝeinst' oure lord crist. [2611] for certes þi þre enemyes of' mankinde þat is to say þy flessch þe feend and þe world. [2612] þou hast' y-suffred hem to entre in to þin herte wilfully by þe wyndow of' þy body [2613] and hast' nouȝt' defended þiself' sufficiently agayns here asceutis and here temptaciouns So þat' þay haue woundid þi soule in fyue places [2614] This is to sayn þe dedly synnes þat ben entred in to þin herte by þy fyue wyndowes [2615] ¶ And in þe same maner oure lord crist hath wolde and suffred þat' þy þre enemyes ben entred in to þin hous by þo wyndowes [2616] and haue I-woundid þi doughter in þe forsayde maner

[2617] ¶ Certes quod Melibeus I se wel þat' ȝe enforce ȝow moche by wordes to ouercome me. in such manere þat' I schal not venge me on myn enemyes [2618] schewynge me þe perils and þe yueles þat' mighten falle of' þis vengeaunce [2619] ¶ But' who-so wolde considre in alle vegeaunces þe periles and þe yueles þat' mighten folwe of' vengeaunces takynge. [2620] a man wolde neuer take vengeaunce and þat' were harm. [2621] For by vengeaunce takynge be [1]wikked men destruyed and disseuered fro þe goode men. [2622] and þay þat haue wille to wikkednes restreignen here wikked purpos whan þay seen þe punysshyng' and þe chastisyng' of' trespasours [2623]

[. . . . . .

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[2624] . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
[2625] ¶ And ȝit say I more þat right' so as a sengle *per*sone synneþ in taking' of' vengeaunce: [2626] Right' so þe Iugge synneþ if' he doo no vengeaunce on him þat' it haþ deserued [2627] ¶ For Senec saith þus ¶ he þat' maister is he saith good to reproue schrewes [2628] And as Cassoder saith ¶ A man dredeþ to doon outrage whan he woot' and knoweþ þat' it displeseþ to þe Iugges and þe souerayne s. [2629] and anoþer saith ¶ The Iugge þat' dredeþ to demen right' makeþ schrewes // [2630] And seint' poul þappostoil saith in his epistil whan he writeþ to þe romayns ¶ The Iugges bere not' þe spere wiþoute cause. [2631] but' þay beren it' to punysshe þe schrewes and mys doers and for to defende wiþ þe goode men. [2632] If' ȝe wol take vengeaunce on ȝoure enemyes ȝe schul retourne or haue recours to þe Iugges þat' haue iurediccio*un* vpon hem [2633] and he schal pun[i]ssche hem as þe law axeþ and requireþ

[2634] ¶ A quod melibeus þis vengeaunce likeþ me no þi*ng*' [2635] I byþenke me now and take heed how fortune haþ norissched me fro my childhode and haþ holpe me to passen many a strayt' passage [2636] ¶ Now wol I aske her þat' sche schal wiþ goddes help helpe me my schame for to venge

[2637] ¶ Certes quod prudence if' ȝe wil wirche by my counseil. ȝe schul not' assaye fortune by no maner way [2638] ne schul not' lene ne bowe vnto hire after þe word of' Senec [2639] ¶ For þinges þat' beþ folye and þat beþ in hope of' fortune schul neuer come to good ende [2640] ¶ And as þe same Senek' saiþ ¶ The more cleer and þe more schynynge þat fortune is þe more brutil and þe sonner brekeþ sche. [2641] so trusteþ nought in hire For sche is nouȝt' stedefast' ne stable [2642] ¶ For whan þou wenest' or trowest' to be most' seur of' hir

help. sche wol fayle þe and deceyue þe. [2643] And wher as ȝe say þat' fortune haþ norisshed ȝow fro ȝoure childhode [2644] I say þat in so mochel ȝe schul þe lasse truste in hire and in hire witte [2645] ¶ For Senek' saith ¶ what' man þat' is norissched by fortune: sche makeþ him to gret' a fool [2646] ¶ Now siþþe ȝe desire and axe vengeaunce and þe vengeaunce þat' is doon [. . . . . [2647] . . . . . *no gap*] in hope of' fortune is p*er*il-ous and vncerteyn [2648] þanne haueþ noon [1] oþer remedye but' for to haue recours vnto þe sou*er*aigne Iugge þat' vengith alle vilonies and wronges [2649] and he schal venge ȝow after þat' himself' witnesseþ where as he saith [2650] ¶ leueþ þe ve[*n*]geaunce to me and I schal ȝelde it

[2651] ¶ Melibe*us* answerd. If' I ne venge me nouȝt of' þe vilonye þat' me*n* haue doon vnto me. [2652] I schal sounere warne hem þat han doon to me þat' vilonye and alle oþere to doo me anoþ*er* vilonye [2653] For it is writen ¶ Tak' no vengeaunce of' an old vilonye þou suffrest' þin aduersarie do þe a newe vilonye. [2654] and also for my suffra*u*nce men wolde do me so moche vilonye þat' I mighte neither bere it ne susteyne it. [2655] and so schulde I be put' over lowe [2656] For men say In moche sufferynge schal many þinges falle vnto whiche þou schal nouȝt' mowe suffre

[2657] ¶ Certes quod prudence I graunte ȝow wel þat' ouer mochil suffraunce is nouȝt' good: [2658] but' ȝit' folwiþ it nought' þ*er*of' þat' euery p*er*sone to whom men doon vilonye take of' it' vengeaunce. [2659] For it app*er*-tieneþ and longeþ al oonly to þe Iugges. For þay schul venge þe vilonyes and þe iniuries. [2660] and þ*er*fore þe auctoritees þat' ȝe haue sayd aboue been oonly vnderstonden in þe Iugges [2661] ¶ For wha*n* þay suffre to mochil þe wronges and þe vilonyes that ben doon

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wiþoute punysshyng [2662] þay somne not a man oonly to doo newe wronges: but þay comaunde hit. [2663] also þe wise man saith ¶ The Iugge þat correcteþ not þe synnere comaundith him and byddith him doon anoþer synne [2664] ¶ And þe Iugges and souereignes mighten in here lond so mochil suffren of þe schrewes and mys-doeres [2665] þat þay schulde by such suffraunce by proces of tyme wexen of such power and mightt þat þay schulde put out þe Iugges and þe souereignes from here places [2666] & atte laste do hem lese here lordschipes

[2667] But lete vs now putte þat ȝe han leue to venge ȝow. [2668] I say ȝe ben nouȝt of mightt ne power as now to venge ȝou [2669] ¶ For if he wolde make comparisoun as to þe mightt ¶ Of ȝoure aduersaries ȝe schulde fynde in many þinges þat I haue I-schewed ȝow er þis þat here condicioun is bettre þan ȝoures [2670] And þerfore say I þat it is good as now þat ȝe suffre and be pacient

[2671] ¶ Forþermore ȝe knowe þat after [1] þe comune sawe it is a woodnesse a man to stryue with a strenger or a more mighty man þan him-seluen is [2672] And for to stryue wiþ a man of euene strengþe þat is to say with as strong a man as he is. it is peril. [2673] and for to stryue with a weykere it is folye [2674] and þerfore schulde a man fle stryuynge as moche as he mighte [2675] ¶ For Salomon seith ¶ It is a gret worschipe a man to kepe him fro noyse and stryf [2676] ¶ And if it so bifalle or happe þat a man of gretter mightt and strengthe þan þou art do þe greuaunce [2677] stude and busye þe raþer to stille þe same greuaunce þan for to venge þe [2678] ¶ For Senec saith. he putteþ him in a gret peril þat stryueth wiþ a gretter man þan he himseluen is [2679] ¶ And Catoun saith ¶ If a man of heiher estat or degre or more mighty þen þou do þe anoþer grieuaunce: Suffre him. [2680] For he þat haþ oones don þe a grieuaunce

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may anoþer tyme relieue þe and helpe þe. [2681] ȝit sette I a caas ȝe haue bothe might and licence to venge ȝow: [2682] I say þer ben ful many þinges þat schulde restreinge ȝow of vengeaunce takynge [2683] and make ȝow to encline to suffre and to haue pacience of þe wronges þat han ben doon to ȝow. [2684] First and forward ȝe wol considre þe defautes þat been in ȝoure owne persone. [2685] for whiche defautes god haþ suffred ȝow to haue þis tribulacioun as I haue sayd ȝow her byfore [2686] ¶ For þe poete saith // we oughten paciently to suffre þe tribulacioun þat cometh to vs whan þat we þenken and consideren þat we han deserued to haue hem [2687] ¶ And seint poul saith þat whan a man considereþ wel þe nombre of his defautes and of his synnes: [2688] þe peynes and þe tribulaciouns þat he suffereþ semen þe lasse vnto him [2689] ¶ and in as moche as him þenkith his synnes þe more heuy and greuous: [2690] in so moche his peyne is þe lighter and þe more esier vn-to him [2691] ¶ Also ȝe oughten to encline and bowe ȝoure herte to take þe pacience of oure lord ihū crist. as seiþ seint peter in his epistles [2692] ¶ Ihū crist he seiþ haþ suffred for vs and ȝiuen ensample vnto euery man to folwe and sewe him. [2693] For he dede neuer synne ne neuer cam vileyns worde out of his mouþ [2694] whan men cursed him: he cursed hem not ¶ And whan men beete him: he manased hem not. [2695] ¶ Also þe grete pacience which þat seintes þat been in paradys [1]han had in tribulaciouns þat þay haue had and suffred without desert/ or gult [2696] oughte moche stire ȝow to pacience [2697] ¶ Forþermore ȝe schul enforce ȝow to haue pacience [2698] consideringe þat þe tribulaciouns of þis world but litel while enduren & soone passed ben and goon [2699] ¶ And þe ioye þat a man secheþ to haue by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable after þat þe

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apostil seiþ in his epistil [2700] ¶ The ioye of' god he saiþ is perdurable þat' is to say euer-more lastynge [2701] ¶ Also troweth and bilieueþ stedefastly þat' he is not' wel norisched and taught þat' can nought' haue pacience or wil nouȝt' receyue pacience [2702] ¶ For Salomon saith þat' þe doctrine and þe witte of' a man is I-knowe by pacience [2703 ¶ And in anoþer place he seiþ ¶ he þat' hath pacience: gouerneþ him by gret' prudence [2704] ¶ And þe same salamon seiþ. þat' þe wraþful and þe angry man makeþ noyses. and þe pacient' man attempereth and stilleþ him. [2705] he seiþ also ¶ It' is more worth to be pacient' þan for to be right' strong'. [2706] And And he þat' may haue his lordschipe of' his oughne herte: is more worþ and more to preise þan he þat' by his force & by his strengthe takeþ grete citees [2707] ¶ And þerfore saith seint' Iame in his epistil þat' pacience is a gret' vertu of' perfecciou̅n.

[2708] [. . . . . *no gap*]

[2709] but' euery man may not' haue þe perfecciou̅n þat' ȝe seekyn [2710] ne I am not' of' þe nombre of' right' parfyte men: [2711] For myn herte may neuer be in pees vnto þe tyme it be venged [2712] ¶ And al be it/ so that' it was a gret' peril to myne enemyes to don me a vilonye in takinge vengeaunce vpon me: [2713] ȝit' tooken þay noon heede of' þe peril but' filden here wikked desir and her corrage. [2714] and þerfore me þenkith men oughten nought' repreue me þough I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me [2715] ¶ And þough I do a gret' excesse þat' is to say þat' I venge oon outrage by anoþer

[2716] ¶ A quod dame prudence ȝe say ȝoure wille and as ȝow likith. [2717] but' in noon caas in þe world a man ne schulde nouȝt' doon outrage ne excesse for to venge him. [2718] ¶ For Cassidore saiþ. as euel doþ he þat' auengith him by outrage as he þat' doth þe

outrage / [2719] and þ*er*fore ȝe schul venge ȝow after þe ordre of right þat is to sayn by þe lawe and nouȝt by excesse ne by outrage [2720] ¶ And also if ȝe wil venge ȝow of þe outrage of ȝoure adu*er*saries in oþer maner þan right comaundeþ ȝe synnen [2721] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Senec / that [1]a man schal neuer venge schrewednes by schrewednes. [2722] ¶ And if ȝe say þat axeþ a man to defende violence by vyolence. and fightyng by fightynge [2723] ¶ Certes ȝe say soþ wha*n* þe defence is doon anoon wiþouten interualle or wiþoute*n* taryinge or dilay [2724] for to defenden him and nought for to venge him [2725] ¶ And it bihoueþ a man putte such attemp*er*ance in his defence ȝ [2726] þat men haue no cause ne matiere to rep*re*uen him that defendith him of excesse and outrage [. . . . . *no gap*] [2727] ¶ P*ar*de ȝe knowe wel þat ȝe make no defence as now for to defende ȝow but for to venge ȝow [2728] and so semeþ it / þat ȝe haue no wille to do ȝoure wille attemp*er*elly [2729] & þ*er*fore me þenkiþ þat pacience is good ¶ For Salamon saith þ*at* he þat is not pacient schal haue gret harm .

[2730] ¶ Certes q*uo*d melibeus I g*ra*unte ȝou wel þ*at* whan a man is inpacient and wroth. [. . . . . *no gap*] [2731] for þe lawe saith þat he is coupable þat entremettith him or mellith him with such þing as ap*er*teyneþ not vnto him [2732] ¶ Dan Salamon saiþ. he þ*at* entremetteþ him of þe noyse or stryf of anoþer man. is lik him þ*at* takith þe hound by þe eeres. [2733] For right as he þat takiþ þe strong hound by þe eeres is oþer while biten with þe hound ȝ [2734] riȝt in þe same wise it is reso*u*n þat he haue harm þat by his impacience melleþ him of þe noise of anoþer ma*n* where it ap*er*teyneþ not to him [2735] ¶ But/ ȝe schul knowe wel þat þis dede þat

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is to sayn myn disease and my grief touchep me right neigh. [2736] and *per*fore pough I be wrop: it is no meruayle. [2737] and sauynge ȝour *grace* I can not see pat it mighte gretly harme me pough I toke vengeaunce. [2738] For I am richer and more mighty pan myne enemyes been / [2739] And wel knowe ȝe pat by money and by hauynge of grete possessio*uns* ben alle pe pinges of pis world gouernede [2740] ¶ And Salamon saith pat alle pinges obeyen to moneye / dispraisynge pe power of his aduersaries

[2741] [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap*] ¶ Tho sche spak and sayde in pis wyse [2742] ¶ Certes deere sire I graunte ȝow pat ȝe ben riche and mighty [2743] and pat richesse is good to hem pat wel haue geten it/ and pat wel conne vse it [2744] For right as pe body of a man may not be wipoute pe soule: no more may a man lyue wipoute temp*er*el goodes [2745] and by richesse may a man gete him greet frendschipe / [2746] [1]¶ And *per*fore saith Pamphilles. If a neet-hurdes douȝt*er* he saip be riche: sche may cheese of a pousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde [2747] ¶ For of a pousand men oon wil not forsake hir ne refuse hire [2748] ¶ And pis pamphilles seip also ¶ If pou be right happy pat is to sayn if pou be right riche: panne schalt pou fynde a gret nombre of felawes and frendes [2749] ¶ And if py fortune cha*u*nge pat pou wax pore: fare wel frendschipe. [2750] For pou schalt ben aloone wipouten eny companye but if it be pe compaignye of pore folk // [2751] And ȝit saith pis pamphill*us* more ouer ¶ That pey pat/ ben pral and bonde of linage schullen ben maad worpy and noble by richesse [2752] ¶ And right so as by richesse per come many goodes: Right so by pouert comen per many harmes.[. . . .] [2753] [. . . . . .

. . . . . *no gap*] [2754] And þer-
fore clepeþ Cassidore pouert'. [. . . . . .] ruyne.
[2755] þat is to sayn þe moder of' ouerþrowyng' or
fallynge doun [2756] ¶ & þerfore Pieres alphons
oon of' þe grettest aduersites of þis world is: [2757]
whan a free man by kyn or burthe is constreigned
by pouert' to eten þe almes of' his enemyes [2758] ¶ And
þe same seiþ Innocent' in oon of' his bookes
¶ þat' sorweful & vnhappy is þe condicioun of' a pouere
begger. [2759] for if' he axe nouȝt' his mete: he deyeth for
hungir: [2760] and if he axe: he deyeþ for schame.
And algates þe necessite constreigneþ hym to axe. [2761]
And þerfore saiþ Salamon þat' bettre it is to deye þan
to haue such pouert' [2762] And as þe same Sala-
mon saith Bettir is to deye on bitter deth þan for to
lyue in such a wyse [2763] ¶ By þese resouns þat' I
haue sayd vnto ȝow and by many anoþer resoun þat' I
knowe and couþe say [2764] I graunte ȝow þat' richesses ben
goode to hem þat' gete hem wel. & to hem þat' hem wel
vsen [2765] ¶ And þerfore wol I schewe
ȝow how ȝe schulde bere ȝow
in getyng' of' riches and in what' maner ȝe schulde
vse hem

[2766] ¶ First' ȝe schulde gete hem wiþoute gret'
desir by good leysir sokyngly and nought ouer hastily
[2767] ¶ For a man þat is to desirynge for to gete riches
abandoneth him first' to þefte and to alle oþere yueles
[2768] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salamon ¶ he þat' hastith
him to bisyly to waxe riche: schal ben noon Innocent' [2769]
¶ He saiþ also þat' þe riches þat' hastily comeþ to
a man: soone & lightly goth and passeth fro a man [2770]
¶ But' þat' richesse þat [1] comeþ alway litel and litel
waxeþ alway and multipliеþ [2771] ¶ And sire ȝe schal
gete richesse by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure trauayle vnto
ȝoure profyt' [2772] and þat' wiþoute wrong' or harm
doynge to eny oþer persone [2773] ¶ For þe lawe

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saith þat no man makeþ himself riche þat doþ harm to anoþer wight. [2774] þis is to say. þat nature defendeþ and forbedith by right þat no man make himself riche vnto þe harm of anoþer persone. [2775] Tullius saith. þat no sorwe ne drede of deth. ne thought þat may falle to a man [2776] is so moche aȝeinst nature as a man to encresce his oughne profyt to þe harm of anoþer man [2777] ¶ And þough þe grete men and þe riche men gete richesse more lightly þan þou: [2778] ȝit schalt þou not be ydil ne slowe to þy profyt/ For þou schalt in alle wise flee ydilnes. [2779] For Salamon saith þat ydelnesse techiþ a man to do many yueles [2780] ¶ And þe same salamon saiþ þat he þat trauaileth and besieþ him to tilye þe lond schal ete þe breed. [2781] But he þat is ydil and casteþ him to no busynesse ne occupacioun schal falle in to pouert and deye for hunger [2782] ¶ And he þat is ydel and slough can neuer fynde him tyme for to do his profyt [2783] ¶ For þer is a versifiour saith; þe ydel man excuseþ him in wynter by cause of þe grete colde. And in somer by enchesoun of þe grete hete. [2784] ¶ For þese causes saith Catoun ¶ waketh and enclineþ ȝow nouȝt ouer moche for to slepe. For ouermoche reste norischeþ and causeþ many vices [2785] ¶ And þerfore saith seint Ierome: Doþ some goode deedes þat þe deuel which þat is oure enemy ne fynde ȝow vnoccupied [2786] ¶ For þe deuel ne takiþ not lightly vnto his werkes suche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes

[2787] ¶ þanne þus in getynge of riches ȝe moot flee ydelnesse / [2788] ¶ and afterward ȝe schul vse þe richesses þe whiche ȝe han geten by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure trauaile [2789] in such a maner þat men holde ȝow not skarce / ne to sparynge ne to fool large þat is to say ouer large a spender [2790] For right as men blamen an auerous man by cause of his skarsete and chyncherie [2791] in þe same manere is he to blame

þat' spendeth ouer largely [2792] ¶ And *þer*fore saith Catoun ¶ Vse he saith þi richesses þat' þou hast' y-geten [2793] in such a manere þat' þay haue no matier ne cause to calle þe neiþer wrecche ne chynche [2794] ¶ For it is gret' schame to a man to [1] haue a pouer herte and a riche purse [2795] ¶ He saith also þe goodes þat' þou hast' I-geten vse hem by mesure þat is to say spende he*m* mesurably [2796] For þay þat' folily wasten and spenden þe goodes *þat'* þay haue ? [2797] whan þay haue no more p*ro*pre of' here oughne ? þay schape hem to take þe goodes of' anoþer man [2798] ¶ I say thanne ȝe schul flee auarice [2799] vsynge ȝour richesse in such manere þat [. . . *no gap*] ȝoure [. . . .] be buried. [2800] but' þat' ȝe haue þanne in ȝoure might' and in ȝoure weldynge. [2801] For þe wise ma*n* reproueþ þe auerous ma*n* and saith þus in tuo v*er*sus [2802] ¶ wher-to and why burieth a man his goodes by his auarice and knowiþ wel þat' needes most' he deye. [2803] for deth is þe ende of' euery man as in this p*re*sent' lif'. [2804] And for what cause or enchesou*n* ioyneþ he him or knetteþ him so fast' vnto his goodes [2805] þat' alle his wit'es mowe nought' disseuer him or departe him fro his goodes [2806] & knowiþ wel or oughte knowe wel þat' whan he is deed he schal no þing' bere with him out' of' þis world. [2807] ¶ And *þer*fore seiþ seint/ Austyn þat' þe auerous man is likned vnto helle. [2808] þat' þe more þat' it' swolwith þe more it desireþ to swolwe and deuoure [2809] ¶ And as wel as ȝe wolde eschewe to be cleped an auerous man or chinche ? [2810] as wel schulde ȝe kepe ȝow and gouerne ȝow in such a wise þat' men cleped ȝow nouȝt' fool large [2811] ¶ Therfore saiþ Tullius ¶ The goodes he saiþ of' þin hous schulde nought' ben hidde ne kepte so clos ? but' þat' þay might' ben opened by pite and by bonairete [2812] þat' is to sayn to ȝiue hem part' þat' han gret' neede. [2813]

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ne þy goodes schul not be so open to be euery mannes goodes [2814] ¶ Aftirward in getynge of ȝoure richesses and in vsynge hem ȝe schul alway haue þre þinges in ȝoure herte [2815] þat is to say Oure lord god. Conscience. and good name. [2816] First ȝe schul haue god in ȝoure herte [2817] and for no riches ȝe schul in no manere doo no þing which might displese god þat is ȝour creatour and ȝoure maker. [2818] For after þe word of Salamon. It is better to haue litil good wiþ loue of god. [2819] þan to haue mochil good and tresor and lese þe loue of his lord god. [2820] And þe prophete saith. Better is to ben a good man and haue litel good þan tresore [2821] þe to ben holden a schrewe and haue gret riches [2822] ¶ And ȝit say I forþer more þat ȝe schuln alway doon ȝoure businesse to gete ȝow riches. [2823] so þat ȝe gete hem with good conscience [2824] ¶ And þe apostil seith. ther [1]nys þing in þis world of which we schuln haue so gret ioye as whan oure conscience bereþ vs good witnes [2825] ¶ And þe wise man saith substaunce of a man is ful good whan synne is not in his conscience. [2826] Afterward in getynge of ȝoure richesses and in vsynge of hem [2827] þou most haue gret busynesse & gret diligence þat ȝoure good name be alway kept and conserued [2828] ¶ For Salamon saiþ. better it is and more abelith a man for to haue a good name þan for to haue gret riches [2829] and þerfore he saith in anoþer place. Do gret diligence saiþ Salamon in kepyng of þy frend and of þy good name. [2830] For it schal lenger abyde wiþ þe þan eny tresor be it neuer so precious [2831] ¶ And certes he schulde nouȝt be cleped a gentil man þat after god and good conscience alle þinges left ne doþ his diligence and busynesse to kepe his good name. [2832] And Cassidore saith þat it is signe of a good man & a gentil or of a gentil herte whan a man loueþ or desireþ to

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haue a good name. [2833] and þerfore saith seint' augustyn þat' þer ben tuo þinges þat' ben necessarie and needful [2834] and þat is good conscience and good loos [2835] þat' is to sayn. good conscience in þin oughne p*er*sone inward. and good loos of' þin neghebor outward. [2836] and he þat' trusteþ him so moche in his good conscience [2837] þat' he displeseþ and settiþ at' nought his good name or loos and rekkeþ nought þough he kepe not his good name: nys but' a cruel churl

[2838] ¶ Sire now haue I schewed ȝow how ȝe schulde doon in getyng' of' good and riches and how ȝe schuld vse hem [2839] I see wel þat' for þe trust' þat' ȝe haue *in* ȝoure riches: ȝe wolde meue werre and bataile [2840] ¶ I counseile ȝow þat' ȝe bygynne no werre in trust' of' ȝoure riches. for thanne suffisen not' werres to mayntene [2841] ¶ And þ*er*fore saith a philosophre ¶ That' man þat' desireþ and wol algate haue werre: schal neuer haue sufficeaunce. [2842] For þe richere þat' he is: þe gretter dispense most' he make if' he wol haue worschipe or victorie [2843] ¶ And Salamon saith. þe gretter riches þat' a man haþ: þe moo despendours he haþ. [2844] And deere sire al be it' so þat' for ȝoure riches ȝe mowe haue moche folk': [2845] ȝit' byhoueþ it' not' ne it is not' good to bygynne werre þer as ȝe may in oþer maner haue pees vnto ȝoure worschipe and p*r*ofyt'. [2846] For þe victorie of' batailles þat' ben in þis world lith not' in gret nombre or multitude of' poeple ne in vertu of' man: [2847] but it' [1]lith in þe wille & in þe hond of' oure lord god almighty [2848] And Iudas machabeus which was goddes knight' [2849] whan he schulde fighte aȝeinst' his aduersaries þat' hadde a gretter nombre & a gretter multitude of' folk' and strengere þan was þe poeple of' þis machabe. [2850] ȝit' he reconforted his litel poeple / and sayde ryȝt' in þis wise [2851] ¶ As lightly quod he may oure lord god almighty ȝiue victory to fewe folk'.

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[. . *no gap*] [2852] For þe victorie of batailles comeþ nouȝt by þe grete nombre of poeple: [2853] but it comeþ fro oure lord god of heuen [2854] ¶ And dere sire for as moche as þer is no man certeyn if it be worþi þat god ȝiue him victorie [. . . . . *no gap*] or nouȝt after þat þat Salamon saiþ. [2855] þerfore eu*er*y man schulde gretly drede werres to bygynne. [2856] And by cause þat in batailles falle many meruayles and p*er*iles [2857] and happeþ oþer while þat as soone is þe grete man slayn as þe litel man. [2858] and as it is writen in þe secounde book of kynges þe deedes of batayles be auenturous and no thing certeyn [2859] For as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as anoþer. [2860] and þerfore is gret p*er*il in werre. þerfore schulde a man flee and eschewe werre in as moche as a man may goodly [2861] ¶ For Salamon saith. ¶ he þat loueth p*er*il schal falle in p*er*il

[2862] ¶ After þat dame prudens hadde spoke in þis maner: Mellibe answerde and sayde [2863] ¶ I se wel dame þat by ȝoure faire wordes and by ȝoure resou*ns* þat ȝe haue schewed me þat þe werre likeþ ȝow no þing. [2864] but/ I haue not/ ȝit/ herd ȝoure counseil how I schal doo in þis neede

[2865] ¶ Certes quod sche I counseile ȝow þat ȝe accorde wiþ ȝour*e* aduersaries and þat ȝe haue pees with hem [2866] ¶ For seint Iame saiþ in his epistles þat by concord and pees þe smale ryches wexen grete. [2867] and by debaat and discord þe gret richesses fallen doun [2868] ¶ And ȝe knowe wel þat oon of þe moste grettest and soueraign þing*es* þat is in þis world is vnite & pees [2869] ¶ And þerfore saith oure lord ihū crist to his aposteles in þis wise [2870] ¶ wol happy and blessed be þay þat louen and purchacen pees. for þay ben called children of crist [2871] ¶ A quod Melibe. Now se I wel þat ȝe louen not myn honour ne my worschipe [2872] and knoweþ wel þat myne

aduersaries han bygonne þis debate and brige by here outrage [2873] And ȝe see wel þat' þay require ne praye me not of' pees. ne þay askyn nouȝt' to be recounseild? [2874] wol ȝe þanne þat' I goo & [1]meke me vnto hem and crie hem mercy. [2875] for soþe þat' were not' my worschipe [2876] ¶ For right' as men seyn þat' ouer gret' pryde engendreþ despisyng'. so fareþ it' by to gret' humblete or mekenesse

[2877] ¶ Thanne bygan dame prudence to make semblant' of' wraþþe and sayde. [2878] Certes sire saue ȝoure grace. I loue ȝoure honour and ȝoure p*rofyt'* as I doo myn owne and euer haue doon [2879] ȝe ne mowe noon oþer seyn [2880] ¶ And ȝit' if' I hadde sayd ȝe scholde haue purchaced pees and þe reco*n*siliacioun. I ne hadde not' moche mys-take me ne seyd amys? [2881] For þe wise man saith. þe discencioun bigynneþ by anoþ*er* man and þe reconsilynge bygynneþ by þyself' [2882] ¶ And þe p*r*ophete saith ¶ Flee schame and schrewednesse and doo goodnesse. [2883] Seeke pees and folwe it as moche as in þe is. [2884] ȝet' seiþ he not þat' ȝe schul raþer pursewe to ȝoure aduersaries for pees þan þei schul to ȝow. [2885] For I knowe wel þat' ȝe be so hard-herted þat' ȝe wil doo no þing' for me [2886] ¶ And salamon saith. he þat' is ouer hard herted atte laste he schal mys happe and my[s]-tyde

[2887] ¶ whan melibe had seyn dame prudence make semblaunce of' wraþþe? he sayde in þis wise. [2888] dame I p*ray* ȝow þat' ȝe be not' displesed of' þinges þat' I say [2889] For ȝe knoweth wel þat' I am angry and wroþ and þat' is no wonder. [2890] and þay þat' ben wroþ wot' not' wel what' þay doon ne what' þay say [2891] þerfore þe p*r*oph*e*te saiþ þat' troublit' eyen haue no cleer sight' [2892] ¶ But' sayeth and counsaileþ me forþ as ȝow likeþ For I am redy to doo right' as ȝe wol desire. [2893] and if' ȝe reproue me of' my folye? I am þe more holde to loue ȝow and to prayse

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ȝow [2894] ¶ For Salamon saiþ þat' he þat' repreueþ him þat doth folie: [2895] he schal fynde gret*ter* grace þan he þat' deceyueth him by swete wordes

[2896] ¶ Thanne sayde dame prudence I make no semblant' of' wraþþe ne of' anger but' for ȝoure grete profyt [2897] ¶ For Salamon saith. he is more worth þat' reproueþ or chydeþ a fool for his folie schewynge him semblant of' wraþþe [2898] þan he þat' supporteþ him and prayseþ him in his mysdoyng'. and laugheþ at' his folie [2899] ¶ And þis same Salo*mo*n saiþ afterward þat' by þe sorweful visage of' a man þat' is to sayn by sory and heuy countena*u*nce of' a man [2900] þe fool correcteþ himself' and amendeþ

[2901] ¶ þanne sayde Melibeus. I schal not' conne answere to so many resouns as ȝe putten to me and schewen. [2902] sayeth schortly ȝoure wille and ȝoure [1]counseil. and I am al redy to fulfille and p*ar*fourme it

[2903] ¶ Thanne dame prudence discouered al here counsail and hire wille vn-to him and sayde [2904] ¶ I counseile ȝow quod sche aboue all*e* þinges þat' ȝe make pees bitwen god and ȝow [2905] and beþ reconsiled vnto him and to his grace. [2906] for I haue sayd ȝow her biforn. God hath suffred ȝow haue þis [. . . *no gap*] disease for ȝoure synnes [2907] and if' ȝe do as I say ȝow god wol sende ȝoure aduersaries vnto ȝow [2908] and make hem falle at' ȝoure feet' al redy to doo ȝoure wille and ȝoure comaundeme*n*t' [2909] ¶ For Salamon saith. whan þe condicio*u*n of' ma*n* is plesant' and likyng' to god: [2910] he chaungeþ þe hertes of' þe ma*n*nes adu*er*saries and constreigneþ hem to biseke him of' pees & of' grace. [2911] and I pray ȝow let' me speke wiþ ȝoure aduersaries in priue place [2912] for þay schul not' knowe it by ȝoure wille or ȝoure assent [2913] ¶ And þanne whan I knowe here wille and here assent': I may counseile ȝow þe more seurly

[2914] ¶ Dame quod Melibeus doþ ȝoure wille and

[1 *leaf* 223]

ȝoure likyng' [2915] For I putte me holly *in* ȝoure disposicio*un* and ordinaunce

[2916] ¶ Thanne Dame prudence whan sche seih þe good wille of' hir housbond. sche deliu*er*ed and took' a vis by hir self' [2917] þenkynge how sche mighte bringe þis neede vnto a good conclusioun and to a good ende [2918] ¶ And whan sche saugh hire tyme: sche sente for þese aduersaries to come vnto hire in to a priue place [2919] and schewed wysly vnto he*m* þe grete goddes þat' comen of' pees [2920] and þe grete harmes and p*er*ils þat' ben in werre [2921] and sayde to hem in goodly man*er*e how þat' hem aughte to haue gret' repentaunce [2922] of' þe iniurie & wrong' þat' þay hadde doon to Melibe hire lord and vnto hire and hi*r*e douȝter.

[2923] and whan þay herden þe goodly wordes of' dame prudence [2924] þey were þo surprised and rauyssched and hadden so gret ioye of' hire þat' wonder was to telle [2925] ¶ A lady quod thay. ȝe haue schewed vnto vs þe blessyng' of' swetnes after þe sawe of' Dauid þe p*ro*phete [2926] for þe recounsilyng' which we be nouȝt' worþy to haue in no manere. [2927] But' we oughten require it wiþ gret contricio*un* and humilite. [2928] ȝe of' ȝoure grete goodnes haue presented vnto vs [2929] ¶ Now we se wel þat' þe science of' Salamon is ful trewe [2930] he saith þat' swete wordes multiplien and encrescen frendes and maken schrewes to ben debonaire and meke.

[2931] certes quod þay we putten oure deede and al oure matier and cause al holly in ȝoure good wille [2932] and ben redy to obeye to þe speche [1] and to þe comaundeme*n*t' of' my lord Melibe. [2933] and þ*er*fore deere & benigne lady we pray ȝow and byseke ȝow as meekely as we conne and may [2934] þat' it like to ȝowre grete goodnes to fulfille in deede ȝoure goodliche wordes. [2935] For we considere and knowleche wel

[1 *leaf* 223, *back*]

þat' we haue offended and greued my lord Melibe out' of' resoun and out' of' mesure [2936] so ferforth þat' we ben nouȝt/ of' power to make his amendes. [2937] and þ*er*fore we oblie vs and bynde vs and oure frendes for to doo al his wille and his comau*n*deme*n*tȝ. [2938] But p*er*auenture he haþ such heuynes & such wraþþe to vs ward by cause of' oure offence: [2939] þat' he wol enioyne vs such peyne as we mow not' bere ne susteyne [2940] ¶ and þ*er*fore noble lady we biseke to ȝoure wo*m*manly pite [2941] to take such auysement in þis neede þat' we ne oure frendes ben not disherited and destroyed þurgh oure folye

[2942] ¶ Certes quod dame prudence it is an hard þing' and right a p*er*ilous [2943] þat' a ma*n* put' him al outrely in þe arbitracio*u*n and Iuggement and þe might' and power of' his enemyes [2944] ¶ For Salamo*n* saiþ leeueþ and ȝiueth credence to þat' þat' I schal say. I say quod he ȝeue poeple and gou*er*nours of' holy chirche [2945] to þy sone to þi wyf/. and to þy frend ne to þy brother [2946] ne ȝeue þou neuer mig̃ht' ne maystry of' þy body whil þou lyuest' [2947] ¶ Now sith he defendith a man schulde not ȝiue to his broþ*er* ne to his frend þe mig̃ht' of' his body. [2948] by a strenger resoun he defendeþ and forbedith a man to ȝiue his body to his enemye. [2949] but' naþeles I cou*n*seile ȝow þat' ȝe mystruste nouȝt' my lord. [2950] For I wot' wel and knowe verraily þat' he is debonaire and meke. large curteys [2951] and no þing' desirous ne coueytous of' good ne richesse. [2952] For þer nys no þing' in þis world þat' he desireth saue oonly worschipe and honour. [2953] Forþ*er*more I knowe and am right' seure þat' he wol no þing' doo in þis neede wiþoute counsail of' me [2954] and I schal so worche in this cause þat' by þe grace of' oure lord god ȝe schul be recounsiled vnto vs

[2955] ¶ Thanne sayde þay with oon voys worschipful

lady we putte vs and oure goodes al fully in ȝoure wille and disposicio*un* [2956] and ben redy to come what day þat' it' like ȝow and vnto ȝoure noblesse / to limite vs or assigne vs [2957] for to make oure obligacio*un* and bond as strong' as it likeþ to ȝoure goodnes [2958] þat' we mowe fulfille þe wille of' ȝow and of' my lord Melibe

[2959] ¶ whan dame prudence had [1]herd þe answeres of' þise men. sche bad hem go agayn pryuely [2960] and sche retourned to hir lord Melibe and tolde him how sche fond his adu*er*saries ful repentant [2961] knowlechinge ful lowely here synnes and trespasses and how þay were redy to suffre alle peyne [2962] requiring' and praying' him of' mercy and pite

[2963] ¶ þanne saide Melibeus. he is wel worþy to haue p*ar*doun and forȝeuenes of' his synne þat' excusith not his synne [2964] but knowlecheþ and repentith him axinge indulgence. [2965] For Senek' saith. þere is þe remissio*un* and forȝeuenesse wher as þe confessio*un* is [2966] ¶ For confessio*un* is neighebor to Innocence [2967] And he saith in anoþ*er* place. he þat' hath schame of' his synne knowlechith it/. [. . . . . *no gap*] and þ*er*fore I assente and conferme me to haue pees. [2968] but it is good þat we doo it nouȝt' wiþoute assent' & þe wille of' oure frendes

[2969] ¶ Thanne was prudence right glad & iolyf' and sayde. [2970] Certes sire quod sche ȝe ben wel and goodly auysed. [2971] for right' as by þe counsail and assent and help of' ȝoure frendes ȝe haue be stired to venge ȝow & make werre: [2972] Right' so wiþoute here counseil schul ȝe nought' acorde ȝow ne haue pees wiþ ȝoure aduersaries. [2973] For þe lawe saith. Ther nys no þing' so good by way of' kinde as þ*ing'* to be vnbounde by him þat' it' was bounde

[2974] And þanne dame prudence wiþoute delay or taryinge sente anoon messageres for here kyn and foi here olde frendes whiche þat were trewe and wyse [2975]

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and tolde hem by ordre in þe presence of Melibe of þis matier as it is aboue expressed and declared [2976] and praide hem þat þay wolde ȝiue here avys and counseil what best were to doon in þis matiere [2977] ¶ And whan melibeus frendes hadde take here auys and deliberacioun of þe forsayde matier [2978] and hadden examyned it by greet besynes and gret diligence [2979] þey ȝafe him ful counsail to haue pees and reste. [2980] and þat Melibeus schulde wiþ good hert resceyue his aduersaries to forȝiuenes and mercy

[2981] ¶ And whan dame prudence had herd thassent of hir lord Melibeus and counseil of his frendes [2982] accorde wiþ hire wille & hire entencioun: [2983] sche was wonderly glad in herte and sayde [2984] ¶ Ther is a noble prouerbe þat saith ¶ The goodnesse þat þou maist do þis day: [2985] abyde not ne delaye it nouȝt/ vnto to morwe. [2986] and þerfore I counseile ȝow ȝe sende ȝoure messageres [1] whiche þat ben discrete and wise [2987] vnto ȝoure aduersaries tellynge hem on ȝoure bihalue [2988] þat if þay wol trete of pees and of accord [2989] þat þay schape hem wiþoute dilay or taryinge to come vnto vs. [2990] which þing was parformed in dede [2991] and whan þese trespasours and repentynge folk/ of here folies þat is to sayn þe aduersaries of Melibe [2992] hadden herd what þe messangeres sayden vnto hem: [2993] þay were right glad and iolif and answerden ful mekely and benignely [2994] ȝeldynge graces & þankinges to here lord Melibe and to al his compaignye [2995] and schope hem wiþout delay to go wiþ þe messangeres and obeye hem to þe comaundement of here lord Melibe

[2996] ¶ And right anoon þay token here way to þe court of Melibe / [2997] and token wiþ hem some of here trewe frendes to make faith for hem and for to ben here borwes [2998] ¶ And whan þay were comen to

[1 *leaf* 224, *back*]

þe p*re*sence of' Melibeus he seyde hem þise wordes [2999] ¶ It' stondith þus quod Melibeus and soþ it is þat' ȝe [3000] causeles and wiþouten skile and reso*un* [3001] haue doon gret' iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf' prudence and to my douȝt*er* also. [3002] For ȝe haue entred in to myn hous by violence [3003] and haue doon such outrage þat' all*e* men knowe wel þat' ȝe haue deserued þe deth. [3004] And þ*er*fore wil I knowe and wite of' ȝow [3005] wheþer ȝe wol putte þe punyschme*n*t and þe chastisement' and þe vengeaunce/ of' þis outrage in þe wille of' me and of' my wif' dame prudence or ȝe wil not

[3006] ¶ Þanne þe wisest' of' hem þre answerde for hem alle & sayde [3007] ¶ Sire quod he we knowe wel þat' we be vnworþy to come to þe court' of' so gret' a lord and so worþy as ȝe be [3008] ¶ For we han so gretly mystake vs and haue offendid and giltid i*n* such a wise ageins ȝoure heighe lordschipe [3009] þat' trewely we haue deserued þe deþ [3010] ¶ But' ȝit/ for þe greete goodnes and debonairete þat' al þe world witnesseþ of' ȝoure p*er*sone: [3011] we submitten vs to þin excellence and benignite of' ȝoure gracio*us* lordschipe [3012] and ben redy to obeye to alle ȝoure comau*n*deme*n*tȝ [3013] bisekynge ȝow þat' of' ȝoure merciable pite ȝe wol considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissio*un* [3014] and graunte vs forȝiuenes of' oure outrage trespas and offence. [3015] For wel ȝe knowen þat' ȝoure liberal grace and mercy strechen forþere in to goodnesse þan doþ oure outrage gilt and trespas in to wikkednes [3016] al be it þat cursedly & da*m*pnably we [1]haue agilt' aȝeinst ȝoure highe lordschipe

[3017] ¶ Thanne Melibe took' hem vp fro þe ground ful benignely [3018] and resceyued here obligacio*un*s and here londes by here oþes vpon here plegges & borwes [3019] and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne vnto his court' [3020] for to accepte and receyue þe sentence and

iuggement þat' Melibe wolde comaunde to be doon on hem by þese causes aforn sayde. [3021] which þing' ordeyned: euery man retourned home to his hous

[3022] ¶ And whan þat' Dame prudence saugh hire tyme: sche feyned and axed hire lord Melibe [3023] what' vengeance he þoughte to take vpon his adu*er*saries.

[3024] to which Melibeus answerd and saide. Certes quod he I þenke and p*ur*pose me fully [3025] to disherite hem of' al þat' euer þay haue and for to putte hem in exil for euermore

[3026] Certes quod dame prudence þis were a cruel sentence and mochil aȝeinst resoun [3027] For ȝe ben riche ynough & haue noon neede of' oþer mennes good [3028] and ȝe mighte lightly gete ȝow a coueitous name [3029] which is vicious þing' and oughte to ben eschewed of' euery man [3030] for after þe sawe of' þe word of' þapostil: Couetise is roote of' alle harmes. [3031] And þ*er*fore it were bettre for ȝow to lese so moche good of' ȝoure oughne þan for to take of' here good in þis manere. [3032] For bettir it is to lese good wiþ worschipe þan it is to wynne good with vilonye and schame. [3033] and euer a man oughte to do his diligence and his busynesse to gete him a good name. [3034] [. . . . . *no gap*] [3035] but' he schulde enforce him alway to do som þing' by which he may renouele his good name. [3036] for it is writen þat' þe olde goode loos of' a man is soone doon or goon and passed whan it is not' newed ne renoueled. [3037] And as touchinge þat' ȝe sayn þat ȝe wol exile ȝoure adu*er*saries: [3038] þat' þinketh me mochil aȝeinst' reso*u*n and out' of' mesure [3039] consideriþ þe power þat' þay han ȝyue to ȝow vpon here body and on hemself' [3040] ¶ And it is writen þat' he is worþy to lese his p*ri*uelege þat' mys vseth þe might and þe power þat' is ȝeue to him [3041] ¶ And ȝit' I sette þe caas ȝe mighte enioyne hem þat' peyne by right' and lawe [3042] which I

trowe ȝe mow nouȝt' do [3043] I say ȝe mighte nouȝt' putte it to execucioun p*er*auenture [3044] and þanne were it likly to torne to þe werre as it' was biforn [3045] And þ*er*fore if' ȝe wol þat men do ȝow obeissaunce: ȝe moste deme more curteisly [3046] þis is to sayn. ȝe moste ȝiue more esyere sentence & iuggem*en*t' [3047] ¶ For [1] it is writen. he þat' most' curteysly comaundeth to him men most' obeyen. [3048] and þ*er*fore I p*ray* ȝow þat' in þis necessite and in þis neede ȝe caste ȝow to ouercome ȝoure herte [3049] ¶ For Senek' saiþ. he þat' ouercomeþ his herte ou*er*comeþ twyes [3050] ¶ And thullius saith. þer is no þing' so comendable in a gret' lord [3051] as whan he is debonaire and meeke and appesith him liȝtly [3052] ¶ And I pray ȝow þat' ȝe wol forbere now to do vengeau*n*ce [3053] in such a manere þat' ȝoure goode name may be kept/ & conserued. [3054] and þat' men mowe haue cause / and matiere to p*ray*se ȝow of' pite and of' m*er*cy [3055] and þat ȝe haue noon cause to repente ȝow of' þing' þat ȝe doon [3056] ¶ For senec saith ¶ he ou*er*comeþ in an euel manere þat' repenteþ him of' his victorie [3057] ¶ wherfore I pray ȝow let' mercy be in ȝoure herte [3058] to theffect and thentent þat' god almighty haue m*er*cy and pite vpon ȝow in his laste iuggement [3059] ¶ For seint' Iame saith in his Epistil: Iuggement wiþ oute mercy schal be doon to him þ*at*' haþ no mercy vpon another wight'

[3060] whan Melibe had herd þe grete skiles and resou*n*s of' dame prudens and wys informacio*un* and techynge: [3061] his herte gan enclyne to þe wille of' his wyf' consideryng' hir trewe entent: [3062] c*on*fermed him anoon and consented fully to werke after hir reed and counseil [3063] ¶ And þankid god of' whom procedeth al goodnes þat' him sente a wif' of' so gret discrecioun [3064] ¶ And whan þe day cam þat' his aduersaries schulden appere in his p*re*sence: [3065] he spak'

[1 *leaf* 225, *lack*]

ful goodly and sayde in þis wise. [3066] ¶ Al be it so þat of ȝoure pryde and heigh p*re*sumpcio*un* and folye and of ȝoure negligence/ and vnconnynge [3067] ȝe haue mys-bore ȝow and trespassed vnto me: [3068] ȝit/ for as moche as I se and biholde ȝoure humilite [3069] þat ȝe ben sory and repenta*un*t of ȝoure giltes: [3070] hit constreigneth me to do ȝow grace. and mercy. [3071] wherfore I receyue ȝow to my grace [3072] and forȝeue ȝow outerly alle þe offenses iniuries and wronges þat ȝe haue don to me and agayns me and myne / [3073] this is þeffect & to þis ende þat god of his endeles mercy [3074] wole at þe tyme of oure deyinge forȝiue vs oure giltes þat we haue trespased to hi*m* *in* þis wrecched world. [3075] for douteles & we ben sory & repenta*un*t of þe sy*n*nes & giltes whiche we haue trespassed Inne i*n* þe sight of oure lord god: [3076] he is so free and [1]so merciable [3077] þat he wil forȝiue vs oure gultes [3078] and bringe vs to þe blisse þat neuer haþ ende AmeN
¶ Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe

[*leaf* 226]

¶ And here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe monkes tale /
[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

Whan ended was my tale of Melibe 3079
And of prudence and hire benignite
Oure hoste sayde as I am faithful man
And by þe precious corpus Madryan
I hadde leuer þan a barel ale
That godeleef my wyf had herd þis tale 3084
For sche is no þing of such pacience
As was þis melibeus wyf dame prudence
By goddes boones whan I bete my knaues
Sche bringeth me forth þe grete clobbet staues 3088
And crieþ slee þe dogges euerychon
And breke of hem boþe bak and bon
And if þat eny neghebour of myne
wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclyne 3092
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace
whan sche comþ hom sche rampeth in my face
And crieþ false coward wreke þy wyf
By Corpes bones I wil haue þy knyf 3096
And þou schalt/ haue my distaf and go spynne
Fro day to night þus sche wil bygynne /
Allas sche saith þat euer I was I-schape
To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape 3100
That wil be ouer-lad wiþ euery wight
þou darst nought stonde by þy wyues right
This is my lif but if þat I wil fight
And out atte dore anoon I most me dight / 3104
And ellis I am lost / but if þat I
Be lik a wilde leoun fool-hardy
I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day
Som neighebor and þanne renne away 3108
For I am perilous with knyf in honde
Al be it þat I dar not hir wiþ-stonde

For sche is bigt in armes by my faith 3111
Thatt schal he fynde þat hire mys doth or saith [leaf 226, back]
Butt lett vs passe a way fro þis matiere
My lord þe monkt quod he be mery oft chere /
For ȝe schul telle a tale trewely
Lo Rowchestre stantt heer faste by 3116
Ryde forþ myn oughne lord brekt nouȝtt oure game
Butt by my trouþe I can nott ȝoure name
whether schal I calle ȝow my lord dan Iohn̄
Or daūn Thomas or elles dan albon 3120
Oft whatt hous be ȝe by ȝour fader kyn
I vow to god þou hastt a ful fair skyn
It is a gentil pasture þer þou gostt
Thow artt nott likt a penauntt or a goostt 3124
vpon my faith þou artt an officer
Som worþy sexteyn or som Celerer
For by my fader soule as to my doome
Thou artt an officer whan þou artt at hoom 3128
No pouer cloysterer ne non nouys
Butt a gouernour wily and wys
And þer wiþ al oft brawne and oft bones
A wel faryngt persone for þe noones 3132
I praye god ȝiue him confusioun
þatt first/ þe brouȝte to religioun
Thow woldistt han be a tredefoul arightt
haddistt þou as grett a leue as mightt 3136
To parforme al þi wil in engendrure
Thow haddistt bigeten many a creature
Allas why werestt þou so wyd a cope
God ȝiftt me sorwe and I were a pope 3140
Noughtt only þou buttt euery mighty man
Though he were schore brode vpon his pan
Schuld han a wiftt for al þis world is lorn
Religioun hath take vp al þe corn 3144
Oftt tredyngt and we burel men ben schrympes
Oftt feble trees þer comeþ feble ympes

This makiþ þat' oure heires ben so sclender
And feble þat' þay may not' wel engender 3148
This makeþ þat' our wyfes wol assaye
Religious folk' for þay may bettre paye [leaf 227]
Of' venus payementes þan may we
God woot' no lusscheburghes paye ȝe / 3152
beþ nouȝt' wroþ my lorde þough I play
For oft' in game a soth I haue herd say
This worþy monk' took' al in pacience /
And saide I wol doon al my diligence 3156
Als fer as souneþ in to honeste /
To telle ȝow a tale or tuo or þre
And if' ȝow lust' to herken hiderward
I wil ȝow say þe lif' of' seint' Edward 3160
Or elles first' tredis wil I ȝow telle /
Of' which I haue an hundred in my celle /
Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie
As olde bookes maken vs memorie 3164
Of' hem þat' stood in greet' prosperite
And is fallen out' of' heigh degre
In to miserie and endith wrecchedly
And þay ben versifyed comunly 3168
Of' six feet' which men clepe exametron
In prose ben eek' endited many oon
And in metre eek' and in sondry wise
Lo þis declaryng' ought' ynough suffise / 3172
Now herkneþ if ȝow likith for to heere
But' first' I ȝow biseche in þis matiere /
þough I by ordre telle not' þise þinges
Be it' of' popes emperours or kynges 3176
After her age as men may write fynde
But' telle hem som bifore. and som byhynde /
As it comeþ now / to my remembraunce
haueþ me excused of' myn ignoraunce 3180

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

I wol bywaile in maner of tregedye
The harm of hem þat stood in heigh degre
And fallen so þe is no remedye
To bring hem out of her aduersite 3184
For certeynly whan fortune lust to flee
Ther may no man þe cours of hir whiel holde
let no man truste in blynd prosperite [leaf 227, back]
Beþ war by þese ensamples trewe and olde / 3188

[*No stanza-breaks in the MS.*]

[*Lucifer.*]

AT lucifer þough he an aungil were ¶ Lucifer
And no man at/ him wil I bygynne
For þough fortune may non aungel dere
From heigh degre ȝit/ fel he for his synne 3192
Doun in to helle. wher he ȝet is Inne
O lucifer brightest of aungels alle
Now art þou Sathanas þat maist nouȝt twynne
Out of miserie in which þou art falle 3196

[*Adam.*]

Lo adam in þe feld of Damassene ¶ Adam
wiþ goddes oughne fynger wrought was he /
And nought bigeten of mannes sperma vnclene
And welt al paradys sauyng oon tre 3200
had neuer worldly man suche degre
As adam til he for mys gouernance
was dryuen out of heigh prosperite
To labour and to helle and to meschaunce 3204

[*Sampson.*]

Lo Sampson. þat' was annunciate ¶ Sampson
By þangel long' er his natiuite /
And was to god almighty consecrate
And stood in nobles whil þat' he mig̃ht se 3208
was neuer such anoþer as was he
To speke of' strengþ. and þerto hardynesse
But' to his wyfes tolde he his secre
Thurg̃h which he slough̃ himself' for wrecchidnesse / 3212

[. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. 3216
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 3220

Thre hundred foxis. tok' Sampson for Ire
And alle her tayles he togider bond
And sette þe foxes tailes alle on fuyre
For he in euery tail hath knyt' a brond 3224
And þay brent' alle þe cornes of' þat lond
And alle her Olyuers. and vynes eeke
A þousand men he slough̃ eek' wiþ his hond
And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke 3228

Whan þay were slayn so þursted him þat he
was wel ner lorn for which he gan to preye
That' god wolde of' his peyne haue som pite
And send him drynk' and elles most he deye 3232
And out' of' his asses cheke þat' was so dreye [*leaf* 228]
Out' of' a woung' toþ sprong' anon a welle
Of' which he dronk' ynough̃ schortly to seye
Thus halp him god as Iudicum can telle 3236

By verray fors of' algason on a nigh̃t'
Maugre þe philistiens of' þat' cite
The gates of' þe toun he haþ vp pligh̃t/
And on his bak' caried hem haþ he / 3240
heigh vpon an hil wher men might' hem se /
O noble almighty Sampson leef' and deere
haddest' þou nough̃t' to wommen told þy secre
In al þe world ne hadde be þy peere 3244

This sampson neyther siser dronk' ne wyn /
Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere
By precept' of' þe messager diuyn
For alle his strengþes in his heres were 3248
And fully twenty wynter ȝer by ȝere/
he hadde of' Ier*usal*em þe gouernaunce
But' soone he schal wepe many a teere
For wy*m*men schuln him bringe to meschaunce 3252

Vn-to his lemman Dalida he tolde
That' in his heres al his strengþe lay
And falsly to his foomen sche him solde
And slepyng' in hir barm vpon a day 3256
Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away
And made his foomen al his craft' espien
And whan þay fond him in þis array
Thay bound him fast' and put out boþe his yen 3260

But er his heer clipped was or I-schaue
Ther was no bond wiþ which men might' him bynde
But' now is he in p*ri*soun in a caue
Ther as þay made him at' þe querne grynde 3264
O noble Sampson strengest' of' al man kynde
O whilom iugge in glory and in richesse /
Now maystow wepe wiþ þine eyȝen blynde
Sith þou fro wele art falle to wrecchednesse 3268

Thend of' þis caytif' was as I schal say
his foomen made a fest' vpon a day
And made him as here fool biforn hem play [*leaf* 228, *back*]
And þis was in a temple of' gret array 3272
But/ atte last' he made a foul affray
For he two pilers schook' and made hem falle
And doun fel temple and al and þer it lay
And slough himsilf' and eek' his fomen alle 3276

This is to sayn þe princes euer ichon
And eek' þre þousand bodies were þer slayn
with fallyng' of' þe grete temple of' stoon
Of' Sampson wil I no more sayn 3280
Be war by þese ensamples olde and playn
That' no man telle his counseil to his wyf'
Of' such þing' as he wold haue secre fayn
If/ þat/ it touche his lymes or his lif' 3284

[*Hercules.*]

Of Ercules þe souereyn conquero*ur* ¶ **De Ercule**
Singing' his werkes laude and heigh reno*u*n
For in his tyme of' strength he bar þe flour
he slough̄ and rafte þe skyn fro þe leoun 3288
he of' Centaures layde þe bost' a doun
he arpies slough̄ þe cruel briddes felle
The gold appul he raft' fro þe dragoun
he drof' out' cerbures þe fend of' helle 3292

He slough̄ þe cruel tyrant' bupherus
And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon
he slough þe verray serpent venencus
Of' Adiloyus tuo hornes he raft' oon 3296
he slough Catus in a caue of' stoon)
he slough þe geaunt' adeus þe stronge
he slough þe grisly leoun and þat' anoon)
And bar þe heed vpon his necke longe 3300

Was neuer wight / siþþen þe world bigan
That' slough so many monstres as dede he
Thurgh-out þe wide world his name ran
what' for his strengþe and for his bounte 3304
And euery roialme went he for to se
he was so strong' þer mig̃ht' no man him lette
At' boþe þe worldes endes as saith trophe
In stede of' boundes he a piler sette 3308

A lemman hadde þis noble campioun [leaf 229]
That' hig̃hte Deianire freissh as may
And as þese clerkes maken mencioun
Sche haþ him sent a schurte fresch and gay 3312
Alas þis schirt' allas and wailaway
Enuenymed was soþly with alle
That' er he hadde wered it half' a day
It' made his fleisch al fro his bones falle / 3316

But' natheles som clerkes hir excusen
By oon þat' hig̃hte Nessus þat' it makyd
Be as be may I wil nouȝt' hir accusyn
But' on his bak/ he wered þis schirt' al naked 3320
Til þat' his fleisch was for þe venym blaked
And whan he saugh noon oþer remedye
In hote colis he haþ himself' I-raked
For no venym deyned him to dye 3324

Thus starf' þis mighty and worthy Ercules
lo who may truste fortune eny þrowe
For him þat' folweþ al þis world of' pres
Er he be war is oft' y-layd ful lowe / 3328
Ful wys is he þat/ can himseluen knowe /
Be war for whan þat' fortune lust' to glose /
Than waytith sche hir man to ouerþrowe /
By suche way as he wolde lest' suppose 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

The mighty trone þe precious tresor ¶ De rege
The glorious ceptre and real mageste Nabugodonosor
That' had þe king' Nabugodonosore
wiþ tonge vnnethes may descryued be 3336
he twyes wan ier*usal*em þat Cite
The vessel out' of' þe temple he wiþ him ladde / ¶ Daniel*is* 4to
At Babiloyne was his souereyn see regu*m* &c'
In which his glorie and his delyt' he ladde / 3340

The fairest' childre*n* of' þe blood roial
Of' Israel he dede gelde anoon
And made ylk' of' hem to ben his þral
Amonges oþre Daniel was oon 3344
That' was þe wisest/ child of' eu*er*ychoon
For he þe dremes of' þe king' expouned
Ther as in Caldeyn was þer clerkes noon [*leaf* 229, *back*]
That' wiste to what' fyn his dremes souned 3348

This proude king' let' make a statu of' gold
Sixty cubites long' and seuen in brede
To which ymage boþe ȝonge and olde /
Comaunded he to loue and haue in drede 3352
Or in a fornays ful of' flames rede
he schulde be brent' þat' wolde not' obeye /
But' neuer wolde assente to þat' dede
Danyel ne his felawes tweye 3356

This king' of' kinges preu was elate
he wende god þat' sit' in mageste
Ne might' him nought' / bireue of' his estate
But' sodeynly he left/ his dignite 3360
I-lik' a best' him semed for to be
And eet' hay as an oxe and lay þer-oute /
In rayn with wilde bestes walkyd he.
[til certein tyme was i-come aboute[1]] [1 *In margin, in a later hand.*]

And lik/ an Eglis fetheres were his heres
his hondes like a briddes clowes were
Til god relessed him a certeyn ȝeres
And ȝaf' him witte and þanne with many a tere 3368
he þanked god and euer he is afere
To doon amys or more to trespace
And er þat' tyme he layd was on bere
he knew wel god was ful of' might' and grace 3372

His sone which þat' hightе Balthaȝar
That' huld þe regne after his fader day
he by his fader couþe nought' be war
For proud he was of' hert/ and of' array 3376
And eek' an ydolaster was he ay
his heigh astate assured him in pryde
But' fortune cast' him doun and þer he lay
And sodeynly his regne gan diuide 3380

A fest' he made vnto his lordes alle
vpon a tyme he made hem bliþe be
And þan his officeres gan he calle
Goþ bringeth forth þe vessealx quod he 3384
The which my fader in his prosperite
Out' of' þe temple of' ier*usal*em byraft' [*leaf* 230]
And to oure hihe goddis þanke we/
Of' honours þat' oure eldres with vs laft' 3388

His wif' his lordes and his concubines
Ay dronken whiles her arriont' last'
Out' of' þis noble vesseals sondry wynes
And on a wal þis king' his yhen cast / 3392
And saugh an hond armles þat' wroot fast' /
For fere of' which he quook' and siked sore
þis hond þat' balthaȝar so sore agast'
wrot'. mane. techel. phares. and no more / 3396

In al þe lond magicien was noon
That' couþe expounde what' þis lettre ment
But' Daniel expoundiþ it anoon
And sayde king' god þy fader sent 3400
Glori and honour. regne tresor and rent
And he was proud and no þing' god ne dredde
And þ*er*for god gret' wreche vpon him sent'
And him biraft' þe regne þat' he hadde / 3404

He was out cast' of' mannes compaignye
with asses was his habitacioun
And eete hay in wet' and eek' in drye
Til þat' he knew by grace and by reso*un* 3408
That' god of' heuen had dominacio*un*
Ouer euery regne and eu*er*y creature
And þan had god of' him compassio*un*
And him restored to his regne and his figur*e* 3412

Eke þou þat' art' his sone art' proud also
And knowest' al þis þing' so verrayly
And art' rebel to god and art' his fo
þou dronk' eek' of' his vessel bodily 3416
Thy wyf' eek' and þy wenche sinfully
Dronke of' þe same vessel sondry wynes
And heriest' false goddes cursedly
Therfore to þe schapen ful gret pyne es 3420

This hond was send fro god þat' on þe wal
wrot. mane. techel. phares truste me
Thy regne is doon þou weist' nouȝt at' al
Diuidid is þy regne and it schal be [*leaf* 230, *back*] 3424
To meedes and to p*er*ses ȝeuen quod he
And þilke same night' þe king' was slawe
And Darius occupied his degre
þough þerto neyþer had he right' ne lawe / 3428

Lordyngs ensample her-by may ȝe take
how þat' in lordschip is no sikernesse
For whan fortune wil a man forsake
Sche bereþ a-way his regne and his richesse / 3432
And eek' his frendes boþe more and lesse /
And what' man hath of' frendes þe fortune
Mishap wil make hem enemyes I gesse
[*þis prouerbe* is ful soth̄ & ful comune[1]] [[1] *In a later hand in the margin.*]

[*No break in the MS.*]

Cenobia of' palmire þe queene
As writen p*ar*ciens of' hir noblesse
So worþy was in armes and so keene
That' no wigh̄t' passed hir in hardynesse 3440
Ne in lynage ne in oþer gentilesse /
Of' þe kinges blood / of' pers sche is descendid
I say þat' sche had not most/ fairnesse
But' of' hir schap sche might' not' ben amendid 3444

Fro hir childhod / I fynde þat' sche fledde
Office of' wommen and to woode sche went
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde
with arwes brode þat' sche to hem sent / 3448
Sche was so swyft' þat' sche anoon hem hent
And whan þat' sche was elder sche wolde kille
Leouns / lebardes / and beres alto-rent
And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille 3452

Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke/
And renne in þe mounteyns al þe nigh̄t'
And slepe vnder a bussh̄ and sche couþe eeke
wrastil by verray fors and verray migh̄t 3456
wiþ eny ȝong' man were he neuer so wigh̄t'
Ther mighte no þing' in hir armes stonde
She kept' hir maydenhed from eu*er*y wigh̄t'
To no man deyned hire to be bonde 3460

But atte last hir frendes han hir maried
To Odenake a prince of þat Citee
Al were it so þat sche him longe taried [leaf 231]
And ȝe schul vnderstonde how þat he 3464
had suche fantasies as hadde sche /
But naþeles whan þay were knyt in fere
Thay lyued in ioye and in felicite
For ech of hem had oþer leef and deere 3468

Saue oon þing sche wolde neuer assent
By no way þat he schulde by hir lye
But oones for it was hir playn entent
To haue a child þe world to multiplie 3472
And also soone as she might aspye /
That sche was not wiþ childe ȝit in dede /
Than wold sche suffre him doon his fantasie
Eft sones and nought but oones out of drede / 3476

And if sche were wiþ child at þilke cast
No more schuld he playe þilke game
Til fully fourty dayes were y-past
Than wold sche suffre him to do þe same 3480
Al were þis Odenake wilde or tame
he gat no more of hir for þus sche sayde
hit nas but wyues lecchery and schame /
In oþer caas if þat/ men with hem playde / 3484

Tuo sones by þis Odenak had sche
The which sche kept/ in vertu and lettrure
But now vnto our purpos torne we
I say so worschipful a creature 3488
And wys. worþy. and large with mesure
So penyble in þe werre and curteys eeke
Ne more labour might in werre endure /
was no wher noon in al þis world to seeke 3492

Hir riche array if' it might' be told
As wel in vessel as in hir cloþing'
Sche was al cloþed in perre and gold
And eek' sche lafte nought' for hir huntyng' 3496
To haue of' sondry tonges ful knowing'
whan sche had leyser // and mig̃ht' þerto entent
To lerne bookes was al hir likyng'
How sche in vertu mig̃ht' hir lif' despent' 3500

And schortly of' þis story for to trete [leaf 231, back]
So doughty was hir housbond and eek' sche
That' þay conquered many regnes grete
In thorient' with many a fair citee 3504
Appurtienant' vnto that' mageste /
Of' Rome. and with strong' hond hulden hem fast'
Ne neuer mig̃ht' her fomen doon hem fle
Ay while Odenakes dayes last/ 3508

Her batails who / so lust' hem for to rede
Agayn Sapor þe king' and oþer mo
And how þat' þis processe fel in dede
why sche conquered and what' title had þerto 3512
And after of' hir meschief' and hir woo /
how þat' sche was deceyued and I-take /
let' hem vnto my mayster perark' go
That' writeth of' þis ynoug̃h I vndertake / 3516

Whan Odenake was deed sche mightily
The regnes huld and wiþ hir propre hond
Aȝeins hir foos sche faught' ful trewely
That' þer nas king' ne prince in þat' lond 3520
That' he nas glad if' he þat grace fond
That' sche ne wold vpon his lond werraye
with hir þay made alliaunce by bond
To ben in pees and let' hir ryde and play 3524

The emperour of' Rome Claudius
Ne him biforn þe romayn· Galiene
Ne dorste neuer be so corrageous
Ne noon ermine ne Egipciene 3528
No Surrien ne noon arrabiene
wiþinne þe feld þat durste with hir fight
Lest' þat' sche wold hem wiþ her hondes sleen
Or wiþ hir meyne putten hem to flight 3532

In kinges abyt' went hir sones tuo
As heires of' her fadres regnes alle
And hermanno and Themaleo
here names were and Parciens men hem calle / 3536
But' ay fortune hath in hir hony galle
This mighty queene may no while endure
Fortune out' of' hir regne made hir falle [leaf 232]
To wrecchednesse and to mys aduenture 3540

Aurilian whan þat' þe gouernaunce
Of' Rome cam in-to his hondes tway /
he schop him of' þis queen to do vengeaunce /
And with his legiouns he took' þe way 3544
Toward Cenoby and schortly to say
he made hir flee and atte last' hir hent
And feterid hir and eek' hir children tweye
And wan þe lond and home to Rome he went 3548

Amonges oþer þinges þat he wan
hir chaar þat' was wiþ gold wrouȝt' and perre
This grete Romayn þis aurilian
hath with him lad for þat' men schulde se 3552
Bifore þis triumphe walkith sche /
And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge
Coroun sche was as aftir hir degre
[and ful of' perre chargid here clothynge[1]] [1 In a later hand in the margin.]

Allas fortune. sche that' whilom was
Dredful to kinges and to Emperoures
Now gaulith al þe pepul on hir alas
And sche þat' helmyd was in starke stoures / 3560
And wan bifore tounes stronge and toures
Schal on heed now were a wyntermyte
And sche þat' bar þe cepter ful of' floures
Schal bere a distaf' hir self' for to quyte 3564

[*No break in the MS.*]

O noble petro. þe glori of' Spayne / ¶ **De petro hispannie rege**
whom fortune held so heigh in mageste
wel oughte men þy pitous deþ complayne
Thy bastard broþer made þe to fle 3568
And after / at' a sege by subtilte
þow were bytrayed and lad to his tent
wher / as he with his oughne hond slough þe
Succedyng' in þy lond and in þy rent 3572

The feld of' snow with thegle of' blak' þer-Inne
Caught' wiþ þe leoun reed coloured as is þe gleede
he brewede þe cursednesse and synne
The wikked nest' werker of' þis neede 3576
Nought' Oliuer ne Charles þat ay took' heede
Of' trouthe and honour but/ of' armoryk' [*leaf* 232, *back*]
Geniloun oliuer corruptid for nede
Broughte þis worþy king' in such a bryk' 3580

[*No break in the MS.*]

O worþy petro king' of' Cipres also ¶ De petro Cipre rege
That' alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye /
Ful many an hethen wroughtest' þou ful wo
Of' which þin oughne lieges had enuye 3584
And for no þing' but for þy chiualrie
þay in thy bed han slayn þe by þe morwe
Thus can fortune þe whel gouerne and gye
And out' of' ioye bringe men in to sorwe 3588

[*No break in the MS.*]

Of' Melayn grete Barnabo viscount' ¶ De Barnabo Comite Mediolano
God of' delyt' and strength of' lumbardye
why schuld þyn infortune I nought' accounte
Syn in astaat' þou clombe were so hye 3592
Thy broþer sone þat' was þy double allie
For he þy neuew was and sone in lawe
wiþinne his *prisoun* made þe to dye
But' why ne how not' I þat' þou were slawe / 3596

[*No break in the MS.*]

Of' erl hugilin of' pise þe langour ¶ De hugil*ino* Comite Pise
Ther may no tonge telle þe pite
But' litel out' of' pise stant a tour
In whiche tour / in prison put' was he / 3600
And with him been his litil children þre
Theldest' skarsly fyf' ȝer was of' age /
Allas fortune it was gret' cruelte
Suche briddes to put in such a cage 3604

Dampnyd he was to deye in þat' *prisoun*
For Roger which þat' bisschop was of' pise
Had on him maad a fals suggestion
Thurgh which þe peple gan on him arise 3608
And putte him in prison in such wise
As ȝe han herd and mete and drynk' he hadde
So smal þat' wel vnneþe it may suffise
And þer wiþ al it was ful pore and badde 3612

And on a day bifel þat' in þat' hour
whan þat' his mete was wont' to be brought'
The gayler schet' þe dores of' þat' tour
He herd it wel but he saugh it' nought' [leaf 233] 3616
And in his hert' anoon þer fel a þought'
þat' þay for hungir wolde doon him dyen
Alas quod he allas þat' I was wrought
Ther-wiþ þe teeres felle fro his eyen 3620

His ȝongest' sone þat' þre ȝer was of' age
Vnto him sayde fader why do ye wepe
whan wil þe gayler bringen oure potage
Is þer no morsel bred þat' ȝe doon kepe 3624
I am so hongry þat' I may not sleepe
Now wolde god þat' I mig̃ht slepe euer
Than schuld not' hunger in my wombe crepe
Ther is no þing' saue bred þat' me were leuer 3628

Thus day by day þis child bigan to crie
Til in his fadres barm a-doun he lay
And sayde far wel fader I moot' dye
And kist' his fader and dyde þe same day 3632
And whan þe woful fader deed it say.
For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte
And sayde fortune alas and waylaway
Thin false querel al my woo I wyte 3636

His childer wende þat' it' for hongir was
That' he his armes gnew and noug̃ht' for wo
And sayden fader do nought' so allas
But' rather et' þe fleisch vpon vs tuo 3640
Oure fleisch þou ȝaue vs / oure fleisch þou take vs fro
And ete ynoug̃h right' þus þay to him seyde
And after þat' wiþinne a day or tuo
Thay layde hem in his lappe a-doun and deyde 3644

Himself' despeired eek' for honger starf'
Thus ended is þis mig̃hty eorl of' pise
For his estate fortune fro him carf'
Of' þis tegrede it' ought' ynoug̃h suffise / 3648
who-so wil it hiere in lenger wise
Rede þe gret' poet' of' Itaile
That' hig̃hte Daunt' for he can it deuise
Fro poynt to poynt nouȝt' oon word wil he fayle 3652

[*No break in the MS.*]

Al þough Nero were als vicious ¶ De Nerone
As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun [*leaf* 233, *back*]
ȝit as tellith vs Swethoneus
This wyde world had in subieccioun 3656
Boþe Est and west and Septemtrioun
Of rubies. safers. and of perles white
were alle his cloþes embroudid vp and doun
For he in gemmis / gretly gan delite 3660

More delyt. more pomp of array
Mor proud was neuer Emperour þan he
That ylke cloth þat he had wered a day
After þat tyme he nolde it neuer se 3664
Nettis of gold þred. had he gret plente
To fissche in tyber whan him lust to pleye
his willes were as lawe in his degre
For fortune as his frend wold him obeye 3668

He Rome brent for his delicacie
The senatours he slough vpon a day
To here how men wolde wepe and crye
And slough his broþer. and by his suster lay 3672
his modir made he in pitous array
For hir wombe slyt he to byholde
wher he conceyued so waylaway /
þat he so litel of his moodir tolde 3676

No teer out of his eyen for þat sight/
Ne cam but sayde a fair womman was sche
Gret wonder is þat he couþe or might
Be domesman on hir beaute 3680
The wyn to bringen him comaundid he
And drank anoon noon oþer wo he made
whan might is torned vnto cruelte
Allas to deepe wil þe venym wade / 3684

IN ȝouþe a maister had þis emperour
To teche him letterure and curtesye
For of moralite he was þe flour
And in his tyme but if þe book lye 3688
And whil his maister had of him maistrie
he made him so connyng and so souple /
That long tyme it was or tyrranye
Or ony vice dorst on him vncouple / [leaf 234] 3692

This Seneca of which þat I deuyse ¶ Seneca
By cause Nero had of him such drede
For fro vices he wolde him chastise
Discretly by word and nouȝt by dede / 3696
Sir wold he sayn an emperour mot neede /
Be vertuous and hate tyrannye
For which he in a bath made him to bleede
On boþe his armes til he moste dye 3700

The nero hadde eek a custumance /
No ȝouþe aȝein his maister for to ryse /
which afterward him þought a gret greuaunce
Therfore he made him deye in þis wise 3704
But naþeles þis Seneca þe wise
Ches in bath to deye in þis manere /
Raþer þan to haue anoþer tyrannye
And þus haþ Nero slayn his maister deere / 3708

Now fel it so þat fortune lust no lenger
The highe pride of Nero to cherice
For þough he were strong ȝit was sche strenger
Sche þoughte þus by god I am to nyce 3712
To set a man þat is ful sad of vice
In high degre and emperour him calle /
By god out of his cite I wil him trice
whan he lest weneþ sonnest schal byfalle 3716

The poeple ros on him vpon a nigh̃t
For heigh̃ defaute and whan he it aspyed
Out' of' his dores anoon he haþ him dight
Aloone and þer he wende haue ben allyed 3720
he knokked fast' and ay þe more he cried
The faster schette þay þe doores alle/
Than wist' he wel he had himself' mysgyed
And went' his way no lenger durst' he calle 3724

The peple cried and rumbled vp and doun
That' with his eris herd he how þay sayde
Wher is þis fals traitour þis neroun
For fere almost' out' of' his witte he brayde / 3728
And to his goddes pitously he prayde /
For socour but' it mighte nough̃t betyde / [*leaf* 234, *back*]
For drede of' þis him þoughte þat he dyde
And ran in to a gardyn hym to hyde 373

And in þis gardyn fond he cherlis twaye
Sittyng' by a fuyr ful greet and reed
And to þese che[r]les tuo he gan to pray
To sleen him and to girden of' his heed 3736
That' to his body whan he were deed
were despyt' y-doon for his defame
himself' he slough he couþe no better reed
Of' which fortune þai lough and hadde game / 3740
[*No break in the MS.*]

Was neuer Capitaigne vnder a king' / ¶ De Olipherno
Thas regnes mo put in subieccioun
Ne strenger was in feld of' alle þing'
As in his tyme ne gretter of' renoun 3744
Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun
Than Oliphern. which þat fortune ay kist'
So licorously. and ladde him vp and doun
Til that' his heed was of' er he it wist' 3748

Noughtˢ oonly þatˢ þe world had ofˢ him awe /
For lesyngˢ ofˢ riches and liberte
Butˢ made euery man reneye his lawe /
Nabugodonosor was lord sayde he / 3752
Noon oþer god schuld honoured be
Aȝeinstˢ his heste dar no wightˢ trespace ¶ Et fecerunt filij israel secundum quod constituit eis dominus sacerdos Elyachym
Saue in Betholia a strond cite
wher Eliachim a prestˢ ofˢ þatˢ place

Butˢ takˢ keep ofˢ þatˢ day ofˢ Olipherne
Amyd his ost/ he dronke lay on nightˢ
wiþinne his tente large as is a berne
And ȝitˢ for al his pomp and al his mightˢ 3760
Iudith a womman as he lay vpright
Slepyngˢ his heed ofˢ smotˢ and fro his tent
Ful priuely sche stal from euery wight
And with his heed vnto hir toun sche went 3764

[*No break in the MS.*]

Whatˢ needith itˢ ofˢ kingˢ antiochius ¶ De Rege Antiochie illustri.
To telle his heye real mageste /
his heyhe pride his werke venemous
For such anoþer was þer noon as he [*leaf* 235] 3768
Redeþ which þatˢ he was in machabe
And redith þe proude wordes þatˢ he sayde
And why he fel fro his prosperite
And in an hil. how wrecchidly he deyde 3772

Fortune him haþ enhaunced so in pryde
Thatˢ verraily he wend he mightˢ han teyned
Vnto þe sterris vpon euery syde /
And in a balaunce weyen whatˢ ech mounteyned 3776
And alle þe floodes ofˢ þe see restreyne
And goddes peple had he mostˢ in hate
hem wold he slee in tormentˢ and in peyne
wenyngˢ þatˢ god ne mightˢ his pride abate 3780

And for þat' Nichosor and Thimothe /
with Iewes were venquist/ mightily
Vn to þe Iewes such an hate had he /
That' he bad graithe his chaar hastily 3784
And swor and sayde ful despitously
Vnto Ierusalem he wold eft' soone
To wreke his Ire on it ful cruelly
But' of' his purpos he was let ful soone 3788

God for his manace him so sore smoot'
wiþ inuisible wounde. incurable
That' in his guttes carf' so and bot'
That' his peynes were importable 3792
And certeynly þe wreche was resonable
For on many a man. dede he peyne
But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable /
For al his smert' he nolde him nought restreyne / 3796

But' bad anoon apparailen his host'
And sodeynly er he was of' it ware
God dampned al his pride and al his bost
For he so sore fel out' of' his chare 3800
That' his lymes and his skyn to-tare /
So þat' he no more might' go ne ryde /
But' in a chare men aboute him bare /
Al forbrosed boþe bak' and syde / 3804

The wreche of' god him smot' so cruely
That' in his body wicked wormes crept' [leaf 235, back]
And þer with al he stonk/ so orribly
That' noon of' his meyne þat him kep[t]e 3808
wheþer þat he wook' or elles slepte
Ne mighte nought' þe stynk' of' him endure
In þis meschief' he weyled and eek' wepte /
And knew god lord of' euery creature 3812

To al his host' and to himself' also
Ful wlatsom was þe stynk' and þe carayne
No man mighť him bere to ne fro
And in stynk/ and orrible payne 3816
he starf' ful wrecchedly in a mountayne
Thus haþ þis robbour and þis homicide /
That' many a man made wepe and playne /
Swich guerdoun is þat longeþ vnto pryde 3820
[*No break in the MS.*]

The story of' alisaunder is so comune ¶ De alex*andr*o magno philippi regis macedonie filio &c /
That' every wight' þat haþ discrecioun
haþ herd som what' or al of' this fortune
Thys wyde world as in conclusioun 3824
he wan by strengþe or for his heigh̄ reno*u*n
Thay were glad for pees vnto him sende
The pride of' man and bost' he layd a doun
Wher-so he cam. vnto þe worldes ende / 3828

Comp*ar*isoun ȝit mighte neuer be maked
Bitwen him and noon oþer conquerour
For al þis world for drede of' him haþ quaked
he was of' knyghthod and of' fredam flour 3832
Fortune him made þe heir of' hir honour
Saue wyn and wy*mm*en no þing' mighť aswage
his heigh̄ entent' in armes and labour
So was he ful of' lumyne corage 3836

What' pite were it' to him þough I ȝow tolde
Of' Darius and an hundred þousand mo
Of' kynges princes Dukes and eorles bolde /
which he conquered and brouȝt/ vnto wo 3840
I say as fer as men may ryde or go
The world was his what schold I more deuyse /
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Of' his knighthood it mighte nouȝt suffise / 3844

Twelf' ȝer he regned as saith machabe [*leaf* 236]
Philippes son of' Macedon he was
That' first' was king' in Crece þat contre
O worþy gentil alisaundre alas 3848
That' euer schulde falle such a caas
Empoysoned of' þin oughne folk' þou were
Thyn fortune is torned in to an aas
And right' for þe ne wepte sche neuer a teere 3852

Who schal me ȝiue teeres to compleigne
The deþ of' gentiles and of' fraunchise
That' al þe worlde had in his demeigne
And ȝit' him þought' it' mighte nouȝt suffice 3856
So ful was his corage of' high emprise /
Allas who schal helpe me to endite/
Fals infortune and poysoun to deuyse
The whiche two al þis wo I wyte 3860
[*No break in the MS.*]

By wisedom manhod and gret labour
Fro humble bed to royal mageste /
Vp roos he Iulius þe conquerour
That' wan al thoccident' by land and see 3864
By strengþe of' hond or elles by trete /
And vnto Rome made hem contributarie
And siþþe of' Rome þemperour was he
Til þat' fortune wax his aduersarie / 3868

O mighty Cesar þat' in Thessalie
Agains pompious fader þin in lawe
That' of' þe orient' had al þe chiualrie
Als fer as þat' þe day bigynnes to dawe 3872
Thorugh þi knighthod þou hast' him take and slawe
Saue fewe folk' þat' with pompeus fledde
Þurgh which þou puttist' al þorient in awe
Thanke fortune þat' so wel þe spedde 3876

But' now a litel while I wil bywaile
This pompeus þe noble gouernour
Of' Rome which þat' flowe fro þis bataile
Alas I say oon of' his men a fals traitour 3880
his heed of' smoot' to wynne his fauour
Of' Iulius and him þe heed he brouȝt
Alas pomp of' þe orient conquerour [*leaf 236, back*]
That' fortune to such a fyn þe brought 3884

To Rome agayn repaireþ Iuli*us*
wiþ his triumphe laurial ful hye
But' on a tyme brutus Cassius
That' euer had to his estat' enuye / 3888
Ful priuely haþ made conspiracie /
Agains þis Iulius in subtil wise /
Cast' the place. in which he schulde dye
with boydekyns as I schal ȝow deuyse / 3892

This Iulius to þe Capitoile went
vpon a day as he was wont' to goon
And in þe Capitoil anoon him hent
This false brutus and his oþer foon 3896
And stiked him wiþ boydekyns anoon
with many a wounde and þus þay let him lye
But' neuer gront' he at' no strook' but oon
Or elles at tuo but' if' þe storie lye 3900

So manly was þis Iulius of' hert/
And so wel loued estatly honeste
That' þough his deedly woundes sore smert'
his mantil ouer his hipes caste he 3904
For no man schulde seen his priuete
And as he lay deyinge in a traunce
And wiste wel þat' verrayly deed was he
Of' honeste ȝet' had he remembra*u*nce / 3908

Lucan to þe þis story I recomende
And to Swetoun and to Valirien also
That' al þe story writen word and ende /
how to þese grete conqueroures tuo 3912
Fortune was first' frend and siþþen fo
No man trust vpon hir favour longe /
But' haue hir in awayt' for euermo
witnesse on alle þise conqueroures stronge 3916
[*No break in the MS.*]

Off' riche gresus whilom king' of' lyde
Of' which gresus. Cirus him sore dradde /
ȝet' was he caught' amyddes al his pride
And to þe fuyr to brenne him men him ladde
But such a rayn doun fro þe heuen schadde[1]
That' slough þe fuyr and made him to eschape
But' to be war ȝet' grace noon he hadde /
Til fortune on þe galwes made him gape 3924

¶ **Gresus leuitici capitulo .ij° de spiritu phitonisse habendo octos' iiij° libro Regum capitulo primo**
[1 *leaf* 237]

Whan he was eschaped he couþe nouȝt/ stent
For to bygynne a newe werre agayn
he wende wel for þat' fortune him sent
Such hap þat' he eschaped þurgh þe rayn 3928
That' of' his foos he mighte not' be slayn
And eek' a sweuen vpon a night' he mette
Of' which he was so proud and eek' so fayn
That' in vengeaunce he al his herte sette / 3932

Vpon a tree he was set' as him þouȝt
wher Iubiter him wissch boþe bak' and side
And phebus eek' a fair towail him brouȝt'
To drye him with and þerfore wax his pride 3936
And to his douȝter þat' stood him biside
which þat' he knew in heigh science abounde /
And bad hire telle what it signifyde
And sche his dreem right' þus gan expounde / 3940

The tree quod sche þe galwes is to mene
And Iubiter likenith snow and rayn
And phebus with his towail so clene
Tho ben þe sonne stremes soþ to sayn 3944
Thow schalt enhangid ben fader certayn
Rayn schal þe wasch and sonne schal þe drye
Thus warned sche him ful plat and ek ful playn
his doughter which þat called was phanie 3948

And hanged was Gresus þis proude king
his real tour might him not auaile /
Tegredis ne noon oþer maner þing
Ne can in I synge crie ny biwayle 3952
But for þat fortune wil alway assayle
wiþ vnwar strook þe regnes þat ben proude
For whan men trusteth hir than wil sche faile
And couer hir brighte face with a clowde 3956
¶ Here endeþ þe monk his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ & here bygynne þe prologe
of' þe Nonne prestes tale. of' þe kok' and þe hen.

HO sire quod the knight' no more of' þis [*leaf* 237, *back*]
That' ȝe han said is right' ynough y-wys
And mochil mor. for litel heuynesse
Is right' I-nough for moche folk' I gesse 3960
I say for me it' is a gret disease
wher as men han ben in gret welþe and ease
To hieren of' her sodeyn fal allas
And þe contraire is ioye and gret solas 3964
As whan a man haþ ben in pore estate
And clymbith vp and wexeþ fortunate
And þer abydeþ in prosperite
Such þing' is gladsom as þinkith me 3968
And of' such þing' were goodly for to telle
ȝe quod our host' by seinte paules belle
ȝe say right' soþ þis monk' haþ clappid lowde
he spak' how fortune was clipped with a clowde 3972
I not' neuer what' and als of' tregedie
Right' now ȝe herd and pardy no remedye
It' is for to bywayle or compleyne
That' þat' is doon and also it' is a peyne 3976
As ȝe han said to hiere of' heuynesse /
Sire monk' no more of' þis. so god ȝour soule blesse
ȝour tale anoyeth al þis compaignie
Such a tale is nouȝt' worth a boterflye 3980
For þer Inne is noon disport' ne game
wherfor sir monk'. damp Pieres by ȝour name
I pray ȝow hertly tel vs som what' ellis
For sicurly ner gingling' of' þe bellis 3984

þat' on ȝour bridil hong' on euery syde
By heuen king' þat' for vs alle dyde
I schold er þis han falle doun for sleep
Al þough þe slough had neuer ben so deep 3988
Than had ȝour tale. haue be told in vayn
For certeynly as þese clerkes sayn
wher as a man may haue noon audience
Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence 3992
And wel I wot' þe substance is in me
If' eny þing' schal wel reported be
Sir say som what' of' huntyng' I ȝow pray [*leaf* 238]
Nay quod þe monk' I haue no lust' to play 3996
Now let' another telle as I haue told //
Than spak' our ost' wiþ rude speche and bold //
And said vnto the nonnes prest anoon //
Come ner þou prest'. come ner þou *sir* Ioh̃n // 4000
Tel vs such þing' as may our hertes glade
Be bliþe al þough þou ryde vpon a iade //
what' þough þin hors be boþe foul and lene //
If' he wil serue þe rek' not' a bene // 4004
lok' þat' þin hert' be mery euer mo //
ȝis sire ȝis hoste. also mot I go //
But' I be mery I-wis I wol be blamed //
And right' anoon he haþ his tale tamyd // 4008
And þus he sayd vnto vs euerich oon //
This sweete prest this goodly man sir Ioh̃n ¶ Explicit *prologus*

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygynneth the Nonne prest his tale

A Pore wydow. som del stōpe in age
was whilom duellyng' in a pore cotage 4012
Bisyde a groue stondyng' in a dale
This wydow of' which I telle ȝow my tale
Syn þilke day þat' sche was last' a wif' /
In paciens ladde. a ful symple lyf' 4016
For litel was hir catel and hir rent
By housbondry. of' such as god hir sent
Sche fond hir self' and eek' hir doughtres tuo
Thre large sowes had sche and no mo 4020
Thre kyn. and eek' a scheep þat' highte malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour and eek' hir halle
In which she eet ful many a sclender meel
Of' poynaunt' saws hir needid neuer a deel 4024
Noon deynteth morsel passid þorugh hir þrote
Hir dyete was accordant' to hir cote
Repleccioun ne made hir neuer sik'
Attempre dyete was al hir phisik' 4028
And exercise and hertes suffisaunce
The goute lette hir no þing' for to daunce
Ne poplexie schente not' hir heed
Ne wyn ne drank' he noþer whit ne reed [*leaf* 238, *back*] 4032
Hir bord seruyd boþe with whit' and blak'
Milk' and broun bred in which sche fond no lak'
Saynd bacoun and som tyme an ey or tweye
For sche was as it' were a maner deye 4036
A ȝerd sche had enclosed al aboute
wiþ stikkes and a drye dich wiþoute
In which she had a Cok' þat' hight' Chaunteclere
In al þe lond of' crowyng' was noon his peere 4040

His vois was merier þan þe mery Orgon
On masse dayes þat' in þe chirche goon
wel sikerer was his crowyng' in his logge
þan is a Clok' or an abbay Orologge 4044
By nature knew he ech ascensio*un*
Of' equinoxial in þilke toun
For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid
Thanne crew he it' mig̃ht' not' ben amendid 4048
His comb was redder þan þe fyn coral
And batayld as it' were a castel wal
his bile was blak' and as þe geet' it schon
lik' asur were. his legges and his ton 4052
His nayles whitter þan þe lily flour
And lik' þe burnisch̃t' gold was his colour
This gentil cok' had in his gouernaunce
Seuen hennes for to do al his plesaunce 4056
whiche were his sustres and his p*ar*amoures
And wonder lik' to him as of' coloures
Of' whiche þe fairest' hiewed on hir þrote
was cleped fayre damysel pertilote 4060
Curteys sche was discret and debonaire
And companable and bar hir self' ful faire
Syn þilke day þat' sche was seuen ȝer old
That' sche haþ trewely þe hert' in hold 4064
Of' chaunteclere loken in eu*er*y lith
He loued hir so þat' wel him was þ*er*-with
But' such a ioye was it' to here him synge
whan þat' þe brighte sonne gan to springe 4068
In swete accord my lief' is faren on londe
Fro þilke tyme as I haue vnderstonde [*leaf* 239]
Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge
And so byfel þat in a dawenynge 4072
As Chaunteclere among' his wyues alle /
Sat' on his perche þat' was in his halle
And next' him sat' þis faire p*er*telote
This Chauntecler gan gronen in his þrote 4076

As man þat' in his dreem is drecched sore /
And whan þat' Pertelot' þus herd him rore
Sche was agast' and sayde herte deere
what eylith ȝow to grone in þis manere 4080
ȝe ben a verray sleper fy for schame
And he answerd and sayde þus ma dame
I pray ȝow þat' ȝe take it nouȝt agreef'
By god me mette I was in such meschief' 4084
Right' now þat' ȝit myn hert/ is sore afright'
Now god quod he my sweuen rede aright'
And keep my body out' of' foul prisoun
Me mette how þat I romed vp and doun 4088
wiþinne oure ȝerd wher as I saugh a beest/
was lik' an hound and wold haue maad arrest/
Vpon my body and wold han had me deed
His colour was bitwixe ȝolow and reed 4092
And tipped was his tail and boþe his eeres
with blak'/. vnlik' þe remenaunt of' his heres
His snowt' was smal with glowynge yen tweye
ȝet' of' his look'/ for fer almost' I deye 4096
This caused me my gronyng' douteles
A way quod sche. fy on ȝow herteles
Allas quod sche for by þat' god aboue
Now haue ȝe lost myn hert' and al my loue 4100
I can nought' loue a coward by my feith
For certis what' so eny womman seith
we alle desiren if' it mighte be
To haue housbondes hardy riche and fre 4104
And secre and no nygard ne no fool
Ne him þat is agast' of' euery tool
Ne noon auaunter by þat god aboue
How dorst' ȝe sayn for schame vnto ȝour loue [Vf 239, bk] 4108
That' any þing' might' make ȝow afferd
haue ȝe no mannes hert and han a berd
Allas and can ȝe ben agast' of' sweuenys
Nought' god wot / but' vanite in sweuen is 4112

Sweuens engendrid ben of repleccio*u*ns
And often of fume and of complexiou*n*s
whan humours ben to abunda*u*nt in a wight
Certes þis dreem which ȝe han met to-night 4116
Comeþ of þe grete sup*er*fluite
Of ȝoure reede Colera p*ar*de
which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes
Of arwes and of fuyr with reede beemes 4120
Of rede bestis þat þai wil him byte /
Of Contek and of whelpis greet and lite
Right as þe humo*ur* of malencolie
Causeþ in sleep ful many a man to crye 4124
For fere of beres or of boles blake
Or elles blake deueles wol hem take
Of oþer humours couþe I telle also
That wirken many a man in slep ful woo 4128
But I wol passe as light[l]y as I can
lo Catoun which þat was so wis a man
Sayde he nouȝt þus ne do no force of dremes
Now sire quod sche whan we fle fro þise beemes 4132
For goddis loue as tak som laxatyf
Vp p*er*il of my soule and of my lyf
I counsel ȝow þe best I wol not lye
[. 4136
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Though in þis toun is noon apotecarie
I schal my-self tuo herbes techyn ȝow
That schal be for ȝour hele and for ȝoure prow 4140
And in oure ȝerd þo herbes schal I fynde
The whiche han of her p*ro*prete by kynde
To purgen ȝow bynepe and eek aboue
Forget not þis for goddis oughne loue 4144
ȝe ben ful colerik of complexioun
war*e* þe sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynd ȝow not/ replet in humo*ur*s hote
And if it do I dar wel lay a grote [*leaf* 240] 4148

That' ȝe schul haue a feuer terciane
Or an agu þat' may be ȝoure bane
A day or tuo ȝe schul haue digestiues
Of' wormes er ȝe take ȝour laxatiues 4152
Of' lauriol Century and fumytere
Or elles of' Elder bery þat' growith þere /
Of' Catapus or of' gaytre berijs
Of' erbe yue growe þ in our ȝerd þer mery is 4156
Pike hem vpright' as þay growe and et hem In ·
Be mery housbond for ȝour fader kyn
Dredi þ non dremes I can say no more
Ma dame quod he graunt' mercy of' ȝour lore 4160
But' naþeles as touching' daun Catoun
That' hath of' wisdom such a gret' renoun
Though þat' he bad no dremes for to drede
By god men may in olde bookes rede 4164
Of' many a man more of' auctorite
That' euer catoun was so mot' I the
That' al þe reuers sayn of' his sentence
And han wel founden by experience 4168
That' dremes ben significaciouns
As wel of' ioye as of' tribulaciouns
That' folk' enduren in þis lif' present
Ther nedeth make of' þis noon argument 4172
The verray preue schewith it in dede
Oon of' þe grettest' auctorite þat' men rede
Saith þus · þat' whilom tway felawes wente
On pylgrimage in a ful good entente / 4176
And happed so þay com in to a toun
wher as þer was such congregacioun
Of' people and eek' so streyt' of' herbergage
þat' þay fond nouȝt' as moche as oon cotage / 4180
In which þat þay might' boþe I-logged be
wherfor þay mosten of' necessite
As for þat' night' depart' her compaignye
And ech of' hem goþ to his hostelrye 4184

And took' his loggyng' as it wolde falle
That' oon of' hem was loggid in a stalle [*leaf* 240, *back*]
Fer in a ȝerd with oxen of' þe plough̄
That' oþer man was logged wel ynough̄ 4188
As was his aduenture or fortune
That' vs gouernith alle in comune
And so bifel þat' long' er it' were day
This oon met' in his bed þer as he lay 4192
how þat' his felaw gan vpon him calle
And sayd allas for in an oxe stalle /
This night' I schal be murdrid þer I lye
Now help me deere broþer or I dye 4196
In alle cum to me he sayde
This man out of' his slep for fer abrayde
But' whan þat' he was waked out' of' his sleep
he torned him and took' of' þis no keep 4200
him þough̄t' him dreem nas but a vanite /
Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he
And at/ þe þridde tyme ȝet his felawe
Com as him þough̄t' and sayd I am now slawe 4204
Bihold my bloody woundes deep and wyde
Arise vp erly in þe morwe tyde /
And at' the west' gate of' þe toun quod he /
A cart' of' donge þere schalt' þou see 4208
In which my body is hyd priuely
Do þilke cart' arresten boldely
My gold caused my mourdre soþ to sayn
And told him eu*er*y poynt' how he was slayn 4212
with a ful pitous face pale of' hewe
And truste wel his dreem he fond ful trewe /
For on þe morwe as sone as it was day
To his felawes In he took' þe way 4216
And whan þat' he cam to þis oxe stalle
After his felaw he bigan to calle /
The hostiller answered him anoon
And sayde sire ȝour felaw is agoon 4220

Als soone as day he went/ out of þe toun
This man gan falle in a suspeccioun
Remembring on his dremes þat he mette /
And forth he goth no lenger wold he lette [leaf 241] 4224
Vnto þe west gate of þe toun and fond
A dong cart went as it were to donge lond
That was arrayed in þe same wise
As ȝe han herd þe deede man deuise / 4228
And with an hardy hert he gan to crie
Vengeaunce and iustice of þis felonye
My felaw mordrid is þis same night
And in þis carte. he lith heer vpright 4232
I crye out on þe ministres quod he /
That schulde kepe and reule þis Cite
harrow allas her lith my felaw slayn
what schold I more vnto þis tale sayn 4236
The peple vpstert and caste þe carte to grounde /
And in þe myddes of þe dong þay founde
The dede man þat mordred was al newe /
O blisful god þou art ful iust and trewe 4240
Lo how þow bywreyest mordre al day
Mordre wil out certes it is no nay
Morder is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god that is so iust and resonable 4244
That he ne wold nouȝt suffre it hiled be
Though it abyde a ȝeer or tuo or þre
Morder wil out þis is my conclusioun
And right anoon þe mynistres of þat toun 4248
Han hent þe carter and so sore him pyned
And eek the hostiller so sore engyned
That þay biknew her wikkednes anoon
And were anhonged by þe nekke boon 4252
Here may men se þat dremys ben to drede
And Certes in þe same book I rede
Right in þe nexte Chapitre after þis
I gabbe nought so haue I ioye or bliss 4256

Tuo men þat wolde haue passed ouer see /
For certeyn causes in-to fer cuntre
If þat þe wynd ne hadde ben contrarie
That/ made hem in a Cite for to tarie 4260
That stood ful mery vpon an hauen syde /
But on a day agayn þe euen tyde [*leaf* 241, *back*]
The wynd gan chaunge and [blew] right as him list
Iolyf and glad þey wenten vnto rest 4264
And casten hem ful erly for to sayle
But herkneþ to þat oon man fel a gret meruayle
That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay
him met a wonder drem a-gayn þe day 4268
him þought a man stood by his beddes syd
And him comaunded þat he schuld abyde
And sayd him þus if þou to morwe wende
Thow schalt be dreynt my tale is at an ende 4272
¶ He wook and told his felaw what he mette
And prayde him his viage to lette
As for þat day he prayd him to abyde
his felaw þat lay by his beddis syde 4276
Gan to lawgh and scorned him ful fast
No dreem quod he may so myn herte gaste /
That I wil lette for to do my þinges
I sette not a straw by þy dremynges 4280
For sweuens been but vanitees and iapes
Men dreme al day of owles and of apes
And eke of many a mase þer with al
Men dreme of þinges þat neuer be schal 4284
But sith I see þat þou wilt her abyde /
And þus forslouthe wilfully þy tyde
God wot it reweth me and haue good day
And þus he took his leue and went his way 4288
But er he hadde half his cours I-sayled
Noot I nouȝt why. ne what meschaunce it ayled
But casuelly þe schippes bothom rent
And schip and man vnder þe watir went 4292

In sight' of' oþer schippes þer byside
That' with him sailed at þe same tyde
And þerfore faire pertelot' so deere
By such ensamples olde maistow leere 4296
That' no man scholde be to recheles
Of' dremes for I say þe douteles
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede
Lo in þe lif' of' seint/ kenelm I rede [*leaf* 242] 4300
That' was kenulphus sone þat' noble king'
Of' mertinrike how kenilm mette a þing'
A lutil he was mordred vpon a day
His mordre in his auysioun he say 4304
His norice him expouned euerydel
His sweuen and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun for he nas but' seuen ȝer old
And þerfore litel tale haþ he told 4308
Of' eny drem so holy was his hert
By god I hadde leuer þan my schert
þat' ȝe had rad his legend as haue I
Dame pertelot I say ȝow trewely 4312
Macrobius þat' writ' þe avisioun
In auffrik' of' þe worþy Cipioun
Affermeþ dremes and saith þat' þay been
Warnyng' of' þinges þat' men after seen 4316
And forþermore I pray ȝow lokeþ wel
In þe olde testament' of' Daniel
If' he huld dremes eny vanyte /
Rede eek' of' Ioseph and þer schal ȝe see / 4320
wheþir dremes ben som tyme I say nought' alle
warnyng' of' þinges þat' schul after falle
Lok' of' Egipt' þe king' daun pharao
his baker and his botiler also 4324
whethir þay felte noon effect in dremis
who-so wol seke actes of' sondry remys
May rede of' dremes many a sondry þing'
Lo Cresus which þat' was of' lydes king' 4328

Mette þat' he sat' vpon a tre
which signified he schuld hanged be /
Lo hir andromachia Ectors wif'
That' day þat' Ector schulde lese his lif' 4332
Sche dremed on þe same night' byforn
how þat' þe lif' of' Ector schulde be lorn
If' þilke day he wente to batayle /
Sche warned him but' it might' nouȝt' auaile / 4336
He wente forþ to fighte naþeles
But' he was slayn anoon of' achilles [*leaf* 242, *back*]
But þilke tale is al to long' to telle/
And eek/ it is neigh day I may not' duelle 4340
Schortly I say as for conclusio*un*
That' I schal haue of' þis auisio*un*
Aduersite and I say forþermore
That' I ne telle of' laxatifs no store 4344
For þay ben venemous I wot' it' wel
I hem defye I loue hem neuer a del
Now let' vs speke of' mirthe and lete al þis
Madame p*er*tilot' so haue I blis 4348
Of' o þing' god haþ me sent large g*rac*e
For whan I see þe beaute of' ȝour face
ȝe ben so scarlet' hiew about' ȝour eyȝen
hit' makith al my drede for to deyȝen 4352
For als siker as In principio
Mulier est' hominis confusio
Madame þe sentence of' þis latyn is
wo*m*man is mannes ioye and mannes blis 4356
For when I fiele a-nigh̄t ȝour softe syde /
Al be it' þat' I may not' on ȝou ryde
For þat' ȝour perche is mad so narrow allas /
I am so ful of' ioye and solas 4360
That' I defye boþ sweuen and drem
And with þat' word he fleigh̄ doun fro þe beem
For it was day and eek' his hennes alle
with a chuk'. he gan hem for to calle / 4364

For he had found a corn lay in þe ȝerd
Real he was he was nomore aferd
he fetherid pertelote. twenty tyme
And trad as ofte er þat' it' was prime 4368
he lokith as it were a grim lioun
And on his toon he romeþ vp and doun
him deyneth not' to set' his foot' to grounde
And chukkiþ whan he haþ a corn I-founde 4372
And to him rennen þan his wifes alle
Thus real as a prince is in his halle
¶ Leue I þis Chauntecler in his pasture
And after wol I telle his aduenture [leaf 215] 4376
whan þat' þe moneth in which þe world bigan
That' hightе march whan god maked first' man
was complet' and passed were also
Syn march bygan tway monþes and dayes tuo 4380
Byfell þat' Chauntecler in al his pride
His seuen wyues walkyng' by his syde
Cast' vp his eyȝen to þe brighte sonne
That' in þe signe of' Taurus had I-ronne 4384
Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more
And knew by kynde and by noon oþer lore
þat' it' was prime and crew with blisful steuen
The sonne he sayde. is clomben vpon heuen 4388
Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more I-wis
Ma dame pertelot' my worldes blis
Herknith þese blisful briddes how þay synge /
And seth þese freissche floures how þay springe 4392
Ful is myn hert' of' reuel and solaas
But' sodeinly him fel a sorwful caas
For euer þe latter end of' ioye is wo
God wot' þat' worldly ioye is soone ago 4396
And if' [a] Rethor couþe faire endite
hem a Cronique saufly might' he write
As for a souerayn notabilite ¶ Petrus comestor
Now euery wys man let' him herkne me 4400

This story is also trewe I vndertake
As þe book' is of' Launcelot' þe lake
That' wo*m*man huld in ful gret' reuerence
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence 4404
A Colefox ful / sleigh of' iniquite
That' in þe groue had woned ȝeres þre
By heigh ymaginacio*u*n forncast'
The same nighte þurgh þe hegge brast' 4408
In to þe ȝerd þer Chaunteclere þe faire
was went' and eek' his wyues to repaire
And in a bed of' wortes stille he lay
Til it was passed vndern of' þe day 4412
waytyng' his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle /
As gladly doon þese homicides alle [*leaf* 213, *back*]
That' in awayte lyn to morther men
O false mordrer lurkyng' in þy den 4416
O newe Scariot newe Genilon
Fals dissimilour. greke Synon
That' broughtest' troye al outrely to sorwe
O Chauntecler. O cursed be þe morwe 4420
That' þou in to þe ȝerd flough fro þe bemys
Thow were ful wel I-warned by þy dremys
That' þilke day was p*er*ilous to þe
But' what' þat' god forwot' most' needes be / 4424
After þe opynyo*u*n of' certeyn clerkis
witnesse on him þat' eny clerk is
That' in scole is gret' altercacioun
In þis matier and gret' desputeso*u*n 4428
And hath ben of' an hundred þousend men
But' ȝit' I can not'. bult' it to þe bren
As can þe holy doctor augustyn
Or boece. or þe bisshop Bradwardyn 4432
Wheþer þat' goddis worþy forwetyng'
Streigneth me needely for to do a þing'
Needely clepe I simple necessite
Or elles. if' fre choys be graunted me 4436

To do þat' same þing' or to do it nou3t
Though god forwot' it er þat it was wrought'
Or of' his wityng' streyneþ neuer a deel
But' by necessite condicionel 4440
I wol not' haue to do of' such matiere
My tale is of' a Cok' as 3e schal hiere
That' took' his counseil of' his wyf' with sorwe /
To walken in þe 3erd vpon þe morwe 4444
That' he had met þe dreme þat' I tolde
wy*m*mens counseiles ben fulofte colde
wo*m*mannes counseil brou3t vs first to woo
And made adam fro p*ar*adys to go 4448
Ther as he was ful mery and wel at ease
But' for I not' to him it might displease
If' I counseil of' womman wolde blame
Pas ouer for I sayd it' in my game [leaf 214] 4452
Red auctours wher þay trete of' such matiere
And what' þay sayn of' wo*m*men 3e may heere
These ben þe cokkes wordes and not myne
I can / noon harme / of' wo*m*men diuine / 4456
Faire in þe sond to baþe hir merily
lith pertelot' and alle hir sustres by
Agayn þe sonne and Chaunteclere so free
Sang' merier þan þe meremayd in þe see 4460
For phisiologus seith sicurly
how þat' þay syngen wel and merily
And so byfel þat' as he cast' his ye
Among' þe wortes on a boterflye 4464
he was war of' þis fox þat' lay ful lowe
No þing' ne list' him þanne for to crowe
But' cryde anoon. cok'. cok/. and vp he stert'
As man þat' was affrayed in his hert 4468
For naturelly a beest' desireth flee
Fro his contrarie if' / he may it see
þough he neuer er had sayn it with his ye
þis Chaunteclere whan he gan it aspye 4472

he wold han fled but' þat' þe fox anon
Said gentil sire / allas why wol ȝe goon
Be ȝe affrayd of' me þat' am ȝoure frend
Certes I were worse þan any feend 4476
If' I to ȝow wold harm or vilonye
I am nouȝt' come ȝour counsail to espye
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 4480
But' trewely ȝe haue als mery a steuen
As eny aungel hath þat' is in heuen
Ther wiþ ȝe han in musik' more felynge
Than had Boece or eny þat can synge 4484
My lord ȝour fader god his soule blesse /
And ȝoure moder of' her gentilesse
han in myn hous I-been to my gret ease
And Certes sire ful fayn wold I ȝow please 4488
But' for men speke of' syngyng' I wol say
So mot' I brouke wel myn yen tway
Saue ȝe I herde neuer man so synge
As dede ȝour fadir in þe morwenynge [*leaf* 244, *back*] 4492
Certes it was of' hert' al þat' he song'
And for to make his vois þe more strong'
he wold so peynen him þat' wiþ boþe his yen
he moste wynke so lowde he wolde crien 4496
And stonden on his typtoon þer wiþ al
And streche forth his necke long' and smal
And eek/ he was of' such discressioun
That' þer nas no man in no regioun 4500
That' him in song' or wisdom mighte passe
I haue wel rad in Daun Burnel thasse
Among' his verses how þer was a Cok'
For a prestes sone ȝaf' him a knok' 4504
vpon his leg' whil he was ȝong' and nyce
He made him for to lese his benefice
But certeyn þer is no comparisou*n*
Bitwix þe wisdom and discressiou*n* 4508

Of' ȝoure fader and of' his subtilte
Now syngeþ sire for seinte charite
let' se can ȝe ȝour fader countrefete
This Chanteclere his wynges gan to bete 4512
As man that couþe his tresoun nought' espye
So was he rauyssht' wiþ his flaterie
Allas lordynges many a fals flatour
Is in ȝour hous and many a losengour 4516
That' pleasen ȝow wel more by my faith
Than he þat' soþfastnesse vnto ȝow saith
Rediþ Ecclesiast of' flaterie
Beþ war ȝe lordes of' her treccherie / 4520
This Chaunteclere stood heihe vpon his toos
Strecching' his necke and his yhen cloos
And gan to crowe lowde for þe noones/
And daun Russel þe fox stert' vp at oones 4524
And by þe garget' hente Chaunteclere
And on his bak' toward þe woode him bere
For ȝit' was þere / no man þat' him sewed
O desteny þat' maist not' ben eschiewed 4528
Allas þat' Chaunteclere fleigh fro þe bemis
Allas his wif' roughte nought' of' dremis [*leaf* 245]
And on a friday fel al þis meschaunce
O venus þat art' god of' pleasaunce 4532
Syn þat' þy seruant' was þis Chaunteclere
And in þy seruice did al his powere
More for delit' þan þe world to multiplie
why woldest' þou suffre him on þy day to dye 4536
O gaufred dere mayster souerayn
That' whan þe worþy king' Richard was slayn
with schot compleynedist/ his deþ so sore
why ne had I nouȝt' þy sentence and þy lore 4540
þe friday for to chiden as dede ȝe
For on a fryday soþly slayn was he
Than wold I schewe how þat' I couþe pleyne /
For Chauntecleres drede and for his peyne 4544

Certis such cry ne lamentacioun
was neuer of' ladies maad whan Ilioun
was wonne and pirrus with his strit' swerd
whan he hente kyng' priam by þe berd 4548
And slough him as saith vs Eneydos
As maden alle þe hennes in þe clos
whan þay had sayn of' Chauntecler þe sight'
Nought' soueraignly. dam pertelote schright' 4552
Ful lowder þan did hasdrubaldes wyf'
whan þat' hir housebond had lost/ his lyf'
And þat' þe Romayns had I-brent' Cartage
Sche was so ful of' torment' and of' rage / 4556
That' wilfully vnto þe fuyr sche stert
And brend hir seluen with a stedfast' hert
O woful hennes right' so cride ȝe
As whan þat' Nero brente þe cite 4560
Of' Rome criden þe senatoures wyues
For þat' her housbondes losten alle here lyues
wiþouten gult þis nero hath hem slayn
Now wol I torne to my matier agayn 4564
¶ The sely wydow and hir doughtres tuo
herden þese hennys crie and maken wo
And out' at' dores starte þay anoon
And sayden þe fox toward þe woode is goon [*f* 215, *bk*] 4568
And bar vpon his bak' þe cok' away
And criden out' harrow and wayleway
ha. ha. þe fox and after him þay ran
And eek' with staues many anoþer man 4572
Ran Colle our dogge and talbot' and Garlond
And Malkyn wiþ a distaf' in hir hond
Ran cow and calf' and þe verray hoggoes
So were þey fered for berkyng' of' dogges 4576
And schowtyng' of' þe men and wymmen eke
þay ronne þat' þay þought' her herte breke
Thay ȝelleden as feeldes doon in helle
The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle 4580

The gees for fere flowen ouer þe trees
Out' of' þe hyues cam þe swarm of' bees
So hidous was þe noyse a benedicite
Certes þough Iakke straw and his meyne 4584
Ne maden schoutes neuer half' so schrille
whan þat' þay wolden eny flemyng' kille /
As þilke day was maad vpon þe fox
Of' bras þay brough hornes and of' box 4588
Of' horn of' boon in which þay blew and powped
And þer with al thay schryked and þay howped
It' semed as þat' heuen schulde falle
Now goode men I pray herkneþ alle / 4592
lo how fortune torneþ sodeinly
The hope and pride eek' of' her enuy
This Cok' þat' lay vpon þis foxes bak'
In al his drede vnto the fox he spak' 4596
And saide sire if' þat' I were as ȝe
ȝet' schuld I sayn as wis god helpe me
Turneþ aȝein ȝe proude cherles alle
A verray pestilens vpon ȝow falle / 4600
Now am I come vnto þis woodes syde /
Maugre ȝoure heed þe Cok/ schal heer abyde
I wol him ete in faith and þat' anoon
The Fox answerd in faith it schal be doon 4604
And whil he spak' þat' word al sodeinly
This Cok' brak' from his mouth delyuerly [leaf 214]
And heigh vpon a tree he fleigh̄ anoon
And whan þe fox seigh þat he was I-goon 4608
Allas quod he o. Chaunteclere allas
I haue to ȝow quod he y-don trespas
In as moche as I makid ȝow aferd
whan I ȝow hent' and brouȝt' out' of' þe ȝerd 4612
But' sire I dede it in no wicked entent
Com doun and I schal telle ȝow what I ment
I schal say soþ to ȝow god help me so
Nay þan quod he I schrew vs boþe tuo 4616

And first' I schrew my self' boþe blood and boones
If' þou bigile me. any ofter þan oones
Thou schalt' no more þurgh þy flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke with myn ye 4620
For he þat' wynkith whan he scholde se
Al wilfully god let' him neuer the
Nay quod þe Fox but' god ȝiue him meschaunce /
þat' is so vndiscret of' gouernaunce / 4624
þat' iangleth whan he scholde holde his pees
Lo such it' is for to be recheles
And necligent and trust' on flaterie /
But' ȝe þat' holde / þis tale a folye / 4628
As of' a Fox. or of' a cok' or of' an hen
Takith þe moralite goode men
For seint' poul saiþ þat' al þat writen is
To oure doctrine it' is I-write I-wys 4632
Takith þe fruyt' and let' þe chaf' be stille
Now goode god. if' þat' it' be þy wille
As saith my lor so make vs alle good men
And bring' vs alle. to his blisse ameN 4636
¶ Here endeþ þe tale of' Chaunteclere and pertelote

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygynneþ þe *pr*ologe of þe mau*n*ciples tale

WOt ȝe not wher þer stont a litel toun
which þat cleped is Bob vp and do*u*n
vnder þe Ble in Caunterbury way
Ther gan our hoste for to iape and play 4
And sayde sires what dun is in þe myre
Is þer no man for prayer ne for hyre [*leaf* 246, *back*]
Thal wol awake our felawes al by-hynde
A theef mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde 8
Se how he nappith se for goddes boones
That he wol falle fro his hors at ones
Is þat a Cook of londo*u*n wiþ meschaunce /
Do him come forth he knoweth his penaunce / 12
For he schal telle a tale by my fay
Al þough it be nouȝt worþ a botel hay
Awake þou Cook sit vp god ȝif þe sorwe
what eyleþ þe to slepe by þe morwe / 16
Hast þou had fleen al night or artow dronke
Or hastow with some quen al night I-swonke
So þat þou maist not holden vp þyn heed
This cook þat was pale and no þing reed 20
Sayd to our host so god my soule blesse /
As þer is falle on me such heuynesse
Not I nouȝt why þat me were leuer slepe /
Than þe beste galo*u*n wyn in Chepe / 24

¶ wel quod þe mauncipie if' þat' I may doon ease /
To þe sir Cook' and to no wiȝt' displease /
which þat' her rydeþ in þis compaignye
And our host' wolde of' his curteisie 28
I wol as now excuse þe of' þy tale
For in good faith þi visage is ful pale
þyn eyen daswen eek'. also me þinkith
And wel I woot' þy breth ful foule stynkith 32
That' scheweþ eek' þou art' nought' wel disposid
Of' me certeyn þou schalt' nouȝt' ben I-glosed
Se how he ganith. lo þis dronken wight'
As þough he wolde swolwe vs anoon right 36
hold clos þy mouth by þy fader kynne
The deuel of' helle sette his foot' þer Inne
Thy cursed breth effecte wil vs alle
Fy stynkyng' swyne foule mot' þe falle 40
A. takiþ heed sires of' þis lusty man
Now swete sir. wol ȝe iousf' atte fan
Therto me þinkþ. ȝe beþ right' wel I-schape
I trowe þa ȝe dronken han wyn ape [leaf 247] 44
And þat' whan men playen with a straw
And with his speche þe cook' wax angry & wraw
And on þe mauꝛnciple bygan he nodde fast'
For lak' of' speche. and doꝛn þe hors him cast' 48
wher as he lay til þat' men him up took'
This was a fair Chiuache of' a cook'
Allas þat' he nad hold him by his ladil
And er þat' he agayn were in his sadil 52
Ther was gret' schowuyng' boþe to and fro
To lift' him vp and moche care and wo
So vnwelde was þis sory pallid gost'
And to þe mauꝛnciple þanne spak' oure host' 56
By cause drink' hath dominacioꝛn
Vpon þis man by my sauacioun
I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale
For were it' wyn or old moysty ale 60

þat' he haþ dronk'. he spekiþ in his nose /
And fnesith fast'. and eek' he haþ þe pose
he also to do more þan ynough
To kepe him and his Capil out' of' þe slough 64
And if' he falle fro his capil eft' sone:
þan schal we alle haue ynough to doone
In liftyng' vp his heuy dronken cors
Tel on thy tale of' him make I no fors 68
But' ȝit' mau*n*ciple in faith þou art' to nyce
Thus openly reproeue him of' his vice
Anoþer day he wil p*ar* aduenture
Reclayme þe and bringe þe to lure 72
I mene he speke wol of' smale þinges
As for to pynchyn at' þy rekenynges
That' were not' honest' if' it cam to pref'
Quod þe mau*n*ciple þat' were a gret' meschief' 76
So might' he lightly bringe me in þe snare
ȝit' had I leuer payen for þe mare
which he ryt' on. þan he schulde w*ith* me stryue
I wil not' wrath him al so mot' I þriue 80
That' at' I spak' I sayd it' in my bourde
And wite ȝe what' I haue heer in a gourde [*leaf* 247, *back*]
A draught' of' wyn. is of' a ripe grape /
And right' anoon ȝe schal se a good iape 84
þis Cook' schal drinke þer-of' if' I may
vp peyn of' deth he wol nouȝt' say me nay
And certeinly to tellen as it was /
Of' þis vessel þe cook' dronk' fast' allas 88
what' needid it. he drank' ynough biforn
And whan he hadde pouped in his horn
To þe maunciple he took' þe gourd agayn
And of' þat' draught' þe cook' was wonder fayn 92
And þanked him in such wise as he couþe /
Than gan our host' to laughe wonder louthe /
And sayd I se wel it is necessarie
wher þat' we go good drynk' wiþ vs to carie 96

For þat wol torne rancour and desese
To accord and loue and many racour pese /
O þou bacus I-blessid be þin name
That so canst torne ernest in to game 100
worschip and þonke . be to þy deite
Of þat matier ȝe get no more of me
Tel on þi tale mau*n*cipel I þe pray
wel sir quod he . now herkyn what I say ¶ Narrat 104

[*No break in the MS.*]

Whan phebus duelt' her in þis erþe a doun
As olde bookes maken mencioun
He was þe moste lusty bachiler
Of' al þis world and eek' þe best' archer 108
He slough phiton þe serpent as he lay
Slepyng' agayn þe sonne vpon a day
And many another noble worþy dede
He with his bowe wrought' as men may rede / 112
Pleyen he couþe on euery mynstralcye
And syngen þat' it was a melodye
To heren of' his cleere vois þe soun
Certes þe kyng' of' Thebes amphioun 116
That' with his singyng' wallid þat' citee
Couþe neuer synge half' so wel as he /
Ther-to he was þe semlieste man
That is or was siþþen þe world bigan [leaf 248] 120
what' nediþ it his fortune to descriue
For in þis worlde is noon such on lyue
he was þer with fulfild of' gentilesce
Of' honour and of' parfyt' worþinesse 124
This phebus þat' was flour of' bachilerie
Als wel in fredom as in chiualrie
For to disport' in signe of' victorie
Of' phiton so as telleþ vs þe storie 128
was wont' to bere in his hond a bowe
Now had þis phebus in his hous a crowe
which in a cage he fostred many a day
And taught' it' speken as men doon a iay 132

whit' was þis crowe as is a snow-whyt swan
And countrefete the speche of' euery man
he couþe whan he schulde telle a tale
Ther is wiþinne þis world no nightingale 136
Ne couþe by an hundred þousend del
Singe so wonder merily and wel
Now had þis phebus in his hous a wyf'
which þat' he loued. more þan his lif' 140
And night' and day. did euermor diligence /
hir for to please. and doon hir reuerence
Sauf' oonly if' þe soþ þat' I schal sayn
Ialous he was and wold haue kept hir fayn 144
For him were loth biiaped for to be /
And so is eu*er*y wigh̄t' in such degre
But' al for nough̄t' for it auaileth nou3t
A good wyf' þat' is clene of' werk' and though̄t 148
Schuld not' be kept' in noon awayt certayn
And trewely þe labour is in vayn
To kepe a schrewe for it wil nough̄t' be
This hold I for a verray nycete 152
To spille labour for to kepe wyues
Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyues
But' now to purpos as I first' bigan
This worþi phebus doþ al þat' he can 156
To pleasen hir wenyng' by such plesaunce /
And for his manhod and his gouernau*n*ce [*leaf* 248, *back*]
That' no man schuld han put' him fro hir g*rac*e
But' god it' woot'. þer may no man embrace 160
As to destroy a þing'. þe which nature
haþ naturelly. set' in a creature
Tak' any brid and put him in a cage
And do al þin entent and þy corrage 164
To foster it tenderly wiþ mete and drynk'
And wiþ all*e* þe deyntees þou canst' þink'
And keep it' al so kyndly as þou may
Al þough his cage of' gold be neuer so gay 168

ȝit' haþ þis brid by twenty þousand fold
Leuer to be . in forest' wyd and cold
Gon ete wormes and such wrecchidnes
For euer þis brid wil doon his busynes 172
To scape out' of' his cage whan he may
his liberte þe brid desireth ay
let' take a cat and foster him wel wiþ mylk/
And tender fleisch and mak' his bed of' silk/ 176
And let' him see a mous go by þe wal
Anoon he wayueth mylk' and fleisch and al
And euery deynte which is in þat' hous
Such appetit haþ he to ete þe mous 180
lo heer haþ lust' his dominacioun
And appetit . flemeth discr[e]scioun
Also a sche wolf' haþ a vilayns kynde /
The lewidest' . wolf' þat' sche may fynde 184
Or lest' of' reputacioun him wol sche take
In tyme whan hir lust/ to haue a make/
Alle þis ensamples . tel I by þis men
That' ben vntrewe and no þing' by wo*m*men 188
For men han euer a licorous appetit
On lower þing' to p*ar*forme her delit
Than on her wyues ben þay neuer so faire
Ne neuer so trewe ne so debonaire 192
Fleissch is so newfangil with meschaunce
That' we can in no þinge haue plesaunce
That' souneþ in to vertu eny while
This phebus which þat' þought vpon no gile [leaf 249] 196
Deceyued was for al his iolite
For vnder him anoþer hadde sche/
A man of' litil reputacio*u*n
Nought' worþ to phebus in compariso*u*n 200
Mor harm it is it' happeth ofte so
Of' which þer comeþ boþe harm and woo
And so bifel whan phebus was absent'
His wif' anoon hath for hir lemman sent 204

hir lemman certes. þis is a knauisch speche
Forȝiueþ it me and þat I ȝow biseche
The wise plato saith as ȝe may rede
þe word mot needе accorde wiþ þe dede 208
If men schal telle propurly a þing
The word mot corde wiþ þe þing werkyng
I am a boystous [man] right thus say I
There is no difference trewely 212
Bytwix a wyf þat is of heigh degre /
If of hir body dishonest sche be
And a pore wenche oþer þen þis
If so be þay werke boþe amys 216
But the gentil in estat aboue
Sche schal be cleped his lady as in loue
And for þat oþer is a pore womman
Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman 220
And god it wot my goode lieue broþer
Men layn þat oon as lowe as þat oþer
Right so betwixe atticles tirant
And an outlawe or a þef erraunt 224
The same I say þer is no difference
To alisaunder told was þis sentence
þat for þe tiraunt is of gretter might
Bi force of meyne for to sle doun right 228
And brenne hous and home and make al playn
Lo þerfor is he cleped a Captayn
And for an outlawe haþ so smal meyne
And may not doon so gret an harm as he 232
Ne bringe a contre to so gret meschief /
Men clepen him an outlawe or a þeef [*leaf* 249, *back*]
But for I am a man not texted wel
I wil not telle of textes neuer a del 236
I wol go to my tale as I bigan
whan phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman
Anon þay wrouȝten al her wil volage
This white crow / þat heng alway in cage 240

Bihild her werk' and sayde neuer a word
And whan þat' hom was come phebus þe lord
This Crowe song'. Cuckow. Cockow. Cuckow
what' bird quod phebus what' song' syngistow 244
Ne were þou wont' so merily to synge
That' to myn hert' it was a reioysynge
To here þi vois. allas what' song' is þis
By god quod he I synge not' amys 248
Phebus quod he for al þy worþynes
For al þy beaute and þy gentiles
For alle þy songes and þy menstralcie /
For al þy waytyng' blered is þin ye / 252
with oon of' litel reputacioun
Nought' worth to þe as in comparisoun
The mountauns of' a gnat' so mot' I priue
For on þy bed þy wif' I saugh him swyue 256
what' wol ȝe more þe crowe anoon him tolde /
By sadde toknes and by wordes bolde
how þat' his wyf' had doon hir leccherie
him to gret' schame and to gret vilonye 260
And told him oft/ he saugh it wiþ his yen
This phebus gan awayward for to wryen
him þought' his sorwful herte brast' on tuo
his bowe he bent' and sett' *þer*-In a flo 264
And in his ire he haþ his wif' I-slayn
þis is þeffect þer is no more to sayn
For sorw of' which he brak' his menstralcye
Boþe harp. gitern. and sauterie 268
And eek' he brak' his arwes and his bowe
And after þat' þus spak' he to þe crowe
Traytour quod he wiþ tunge of' scorpioun
Thow hast' me brought' to my confusioun [*leaf* 250] 272
Allas þat' I was born why nere I deed
O dere wyf' O gemme of' lustyhed
That' were to me so sad and eek' so trewe
Now list þou deed with face pale of' hewe 276

Ful gulteles þat dorst' I swere I-wis
O racle hond to do so foule amys
O trouble wit O Ire recheles
That' vnauysed smytest' gulteles 280
O wantrust' ful of' fals suspeccioun
wher was þy wit and þy discrecio*un*
O eu*er*y man be war of' raclenesse
Ne trowe no þing' wiþoute gret' witnesse 284
Smyt' nouȝt' to soone. er þat' þou wite why /
And be auysed wel and sobrely
Er ȝe doon eny execucio*un*
Vpon ȝour Ire for suspeccio*un* 288
Allas a þousand folk' haþ racle Ire
Fordoon. or dun hath brouȝt hem in þe myre
Allas for sorw / I wil my seluen sle
And to þe crowe o false þeef' sayd he 292
I wyl þe quyt' anoon þy false tale /
Thow songe whilom as any nightyngale /
Now schaltow false þef' þy song' forgoon
And eek' þy white fetheres euerich oon 296
Ne neuer in al þy lyf' ne schaltow speke
Thus schal men on a fals þeef' ben a-wreke
Thou and þin o[f]spring' euer schuln be blake
Ne neuer sweete noyse schul ȝe make 300
But' euer crye agayn tempest' and rayn
In tokenyng' þat' þurgh þe my wyf' was slayn
And to þe crowe he stert and þat' anoon
And puld his white feþeres eu*er*ychoon 304
And made him blak' and raft' him al his song'
And eek' his speche and out' at dore him slong'
vnto þe deuel which I him bytake
And for þis cause ben alle crowes blake 308
Lordyngs by þis ensample I ȝow pray
Beth war and takeþ kepe what' ȝe say / [*leaf* 250, *back*]
Ne tellith neuer man in al ȝoure lif'
how þat' anoþer man haþ dight' his wyf' 312

he wol ȝou hatin mortelly certeyn
Daun Salamon as wise clerkes seyn
Techeþ a man to kepe his tonge wel
But' as I sayd. I am nought' tixted wel 316
But/ naþeles þus taught̄e me my dame
My sone thenk' on þe crowe in goddes name
My son keep wel þy tonge and kep þy frend
A wicked tonge. is worse þan a feend 320
My sone fro a feend men may hem blesse
My sone god of' his endeles goodnesse
wallid a tonge wiþ teeþ and lippes eek'
For man schal him auyse what' he speek' 324
My sone ful ofte for to mochil speche /
haþ many a man be spilt' as clerkes teche
But' for a litil speche auisily
Is no man schent to speke generally 328
My sone þy tonge scholdest' þou restreigne
At' alle tyme but' whan 'þou dost' þy peyne /
To speke of' god in honour and prayere
The firste vertu sone if' þou wilt' lere 332
Is to restreigne and kepe wel þy tonge
Thus lerne clerkes whan þat' þay ben ȝonge
My sone of' mochil speking' euel auised
Ther lasse speking' had ynough̄ suffised 336
Comeþ mochil harm þus was me told and taught̄
In mochel speche synne wantiþ nought̄
wost' wher of' a racle tonge serueþ
Right' a swerd for-kutteþ and kerueþ 340
An arm a tuo my dere sone right̄ so
A tonge cutteth frendschip al a tuo
A iangler is to god abhominable
Red Salamon so wys and honurable 344
Red Dauid in his psalmes reed Senek'
My sone spek' not. but' wiþ þy heed þu bek'
Dissimul as þou were deed if' þat' þou heere
A iangler speke of' perilous mateere [leaf 251] 348

The flemyng' saiþ and lere it if' þe lest' /
That' litil iangling causeþ mochil rest'
My sone if' þou no wikked word hast' sayd
The thar not' drede for to be bywrayd 352
But' he þat' haþ mys sayd I dar wel sayn
he may by no way clepe his word agayn
Thing' þat' is sayd. is sayd. and forþ it goþ
Though him repent or be him neuer so loþ 356
He is his þral to whom þat/ he haþ sayd
A tale of' which he is now yuel a payd
My sone be war and be noon auctour newe /
Of' tydyngs wheþer þay ben fals or trewe / 360
wher-so þou comest' amonges heih or lowe /
kep wel þy tonge / and thenk' vpon þe crowe
¶ Here endith þe tale of' þe crowe

[*No break in the MS.*]

GROUP I. FRAGMENT X.

§ 1. THE BLANK-PARSON LINK.

¶ And here begynneth the *pro*lōge of þe P*er*sou*n*s tale

By þat þe ma*u*nciple had had his tale endid
The sonne fro þe south line is descendid
So lowe þat it nas nouȝt to my sight
Degrees [nyne and twenty as in hight[1]] [[1] *In a later hand.*] 4
Ten on þe Clokke it was as I gesse /
For enleuen foote or litil more or lesse /
My schadow was at þilk tyme of þe ȝere
Of which feet as my lengþe parted were / 8
In [sixe[1]] feet equal of p*ro*porcioun
Ther-with þe mones exaltacio*u*n
In mena libra alway gan ascende
As we were entryng at a townes ende 12
For which our host as he was wont to gye
As in þis caas our ioly compaignye
Sayd in þis wise lordings euerich oon
Now lakkeþ vs no moo tales þan oon 16
Fulfilled is my sentens and my decre
I trowe þat we han herd of ech degre
Almost fulfilled is myn ordyna*u*nce
I p*ray* to god so ȝeue him right good cha*u*nce 20
That tellith to vs his tale lustily
Sire prest quod he artow a vicory [*leaf* 251, *back*]
Or artow a p*er*soun say soþ by þy fay
Be what þou be breke nought oure play 24

For eu*er*y man saue þou hath told his tale
vnbocle and schew vs what is in þy male
For trewely me þinkeþ by þy chier
þou scholdist wel knyt vp a gret matier 28
Tel vs a tale anoon for cokkes boones
This p*er*soun answerde al at oones /
Thow getist fable noon I-told for me
For poul þat writes vnto thimothe 32
Repreueþ hem þat weyueþ sothfastnesse
And tellen fables and such wrecchednesse /
why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest/
whan I may sowe whete if þat me lest/ 36
For which I say if þat ȝow lust to hiere
Moralite and v*er*tuous matiere
And þanne þat ȝe wil ȝiue me audience
I wol ful fayn at cristis reu*er*ence 40
Do ȝow plesaunce leful as I can
But trusteþ wel I am a suthern man
I can not geste . rum raf . ruf by letter
Ne god wot rym hold I but litel better 44
And þerfor if ȝow lust I wol not glose
I wol ȝow telle a mery tale in prose /
To knyt vp al this fest and make an ende
And Iħū for his grace wit me sende 48
To schewe ȝow þe way in þis viage
Of þilke p*ar*fyt glorious pilgrimage
That hatte Ierusalem celestial
And if ȝe vouche sauf anoon I schal 52
Bygynne my tale for which I ȝow pray
Telle ȝour avis I can no better say
But naþeles þis meditacioun
I put it ay vnder correctioun 56
Of clerkes for I am not textuel
I take but þe sentens trustiþ wel
Therfor I make protestacio*un*
That I wol stonde to correccioun [*leaf* 252] 60

Vpon þis word we han assented soone
For as it semed it was for to done
To enden in som vertuous sentence
And for to ȝeue him space and audience 64
And bad oure hostꝰ he schulde to him say
Thatꝰ alle we to telle his tale him pray
Our hostꝰ hadde þe wordes for vs alle
Sir prestꝰ quod he now faire ȝow bifalle 68
Say whatꝰ ȝow lustꝰ and we wil gladly hiere
And wiþ þatꝰ word he said in þis manere
Telleþ quod he ȝour meditacioun
Butꝰ hasteth ȝow þe sonne wol a doun 72
Beþ fructuous and þat / in litil space
And to do wel: God sende ȝow grace /

[*No break in the MS.*]

(*The Page-numbers are those of the Six-Text.*)

THE PARSON'S TALE.

A TREATISE ON PENITENCE, IN 3 PARTS:

Part I. On **Penitence**, and its 1st requisite **Contrition (A)** (p. 593—612).
Part II. On its 2nd requisite, **Confession (B)** (p. 612—679).
Part III. On its 3rd requisite, **Satisfaction (C)** (p. 679—684), with the Writer's Leave-taking and Retractations (p. 684-85).

PART I. (p. 593—612).

ON **PENITENCE**, AND ITS 1ST REQUISITE, **CONTRITION**.

Proem on Jeremiah vi. 16. The Tale is to be on *Penitence* as a full noble way to lead folk to Christ, and is to treat of
- i. 'what is Penitence' (p. 594).
- ii. 'whennes it is cleped Penitence'. [*not in the Tale.*]
- iii. 'in how manye maneres been the accio*u*ns or werkynges of Penitence' (p. 594-5).
- iv. 'how many speces ther been of Penitence' (p. 595).
- v. 'whiche thynges ap*er*tenen and bihouen to Penitence' (p. 595—682: nearly all Parts I and III, and all Part II).
- vi. 'whiche thynges destourbe*n* Penitence' (at end of Part III, p. 682) (p. 593).

i. **Penitence** defined, by *a.* St Ambrose; *b.* 'som doctour'; *c.* the writer. Its requisites: 1. bewailing of sins; 2. purpose to have shrift, to do satisfaction, never to sin again, to continue in good works (p. 594).

[ii. *not given.*]

iii. The 3 actions of Penitence: 1. Baptism after sin; 2. not to do deadly sin after baptism; 3. not thus to do venial sin (p. 594-95).

iv. The 3 speces or kinds of Penitence: 1. Solemn (to be put out of church, or do open penance); 2. Common (to go naked on pilgrimage); 3. Private (p. 595).

v. The 3 necessities or requisites for Penitence (p. 596—682):
- **A. Contrition of heart** (p. 596—612).
- **B. Confession of mouth** (Part II, p. 612—679).
- **C. Satisfaction** (Part III, p. 679—682).

Penitence avails against 3 things, by which we wrath Christ (p. 595).

A. Contrition is the root of Penitence, whose stem bears branches and leaves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaction.

Contrition also bears a seed of grace, whose heat draws men to God. (Simile of the child and his nurse's milk.)

Penance is the tree of life (p. 596).

Four Points to be known about Contrition:
1. What it is; 2. the causes that move a man to it; 3. how to be contrite; 4. what it avails the soul (p. 597).

2. The 6 Causes that should move a man to Contrition:
- *a.* Remembrance of Sins (p. 597-8).
- *b.* Whoso does sin is the Thrall of Sin (p. 598-99).
- *c.* Dread of the Day of Doom and the Pains of Hell (p. 599—604). These described: the Doom (p. 599-600); Job's 'lond of mysese and of derknesse' (p. 600-1); the 3 shames in hell against (1) 'Honours, (2) delices, and (3) richesses' (p. 611); poverty in 4 things: no treasure, food, clothing, or friends (p. 602); and no delights of the 5 senses. The pain shall be eternal (p. 603). Hell is orderless (p. 603-4). The 7 causes why the damnd have lost all hope (p. 604).
- *d.* Remembrance of the good works we've left undone, and the loss of the good works done while we were in sin (p. 604-6). Deadly sin wipes out all good works formerly done (p. 605); and no good works can be done in deadly sin (p. 605-6). The new French song, *J'ai tout perdu mon temps* (also quoted in Chaucer's late poem of *Fortune*).

e. Remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins (p. 606). In man's sin, every ordinance is turnd up-so-down (p. 607). For this disorder Christ sufferd (p. 608).

f. The hope of 3 things: 1. Forgiveness of Sins, 2. the Gift of Grace to do well, 3. the Glory of Heaven (p. 609).

3. How to be contrite. Contrition must be universal and total: for sins of thought, for desires against God's law, for wicked words as well as wicked deeds (p. 610). Contrition must be angwishous and continual (p. 609-11).

4. How Contrition helps the soul. It sometimes delivers a man from sin; destroys the prison of hell; cleanses the soul; changes the son of Wrath to the son of Grace (p. 611-12).

PART II (*no.* v. *continued*).

B. CONFESSION (THE 2ND REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 612—679).

B. Confession. § 1. (l. 317) 'what is confession' (p. 612).
§ 2. 'wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon' (p. 672-9).
§ 3. 'whiche thynges been couenable to verray Confession' (p. 674-79).

CONFESSION, § 1.

1. 'Confession is verray shewynge of synnes to the preest' (l. 318) (p. 612). We must understand too
   a. (l. 321) 'whennes that synnes spryngen' (p. 612—15).
   b. 'how they encreessen' (p. 615-16; 672-74).
   c. 'whiche they been' (p. 616—672).

1.*a.* Sin sprang from the fall of Adam (p. 612). The legend of Adam and Eve told (p. 613). From Adam we took Original Sin, and were born sons of eternal damnation; but Baptism rescues us; though we keep liability to temptation, or Concupiscence (p. 613-14).

Concupiscence, or the nourishing and occasion of sin. St Paul and St Jerome's temptations (p. 614-15).

1.*b.* How Sin grows in a man. 1. by Concupiscence; 2. Subjection to the Devil; 3. Hesitation; 4. Doing, the Sin becoming Actual (p. 615-16).

1.*c.* Sin is *α.* venial, *β.* deadly (or mortal).
   α. 1. Venial Sin defined. It skips into Deadly Sin. (Simile of the drops of water into a vessel's hold drowning the ship;) (p. 616).
   β. 1. Deadly Sin defined (p. 617).
   α. 2. Of divers small venial sins, hardly thought sins (p. 617-18); eating, drinking, talking, too much; using your wife too much; not visiting the sick (p. 617); talking vanities at church, &c. (p. 618). Cure of venial sins by love to Christ, prayer, confession, good works, receiving the Sacrament, holy-water, &c. (p. 618).

1.*c.* *β.* 2. *The Seven Deadly Sins.* The Chieftains, head and spring, of all other Sins (p. 619).
   i. Pride (p. 619-26), and its Remedy (p. 626-8).
   ii. Envy (p. 628-30), and its Remedy (p. 630-1).
   iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its Remedy (p. 642-5).
   iv. Accidie or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), and its Remedy (p. 650-1).
   v. Avarice or Covetousness (p. 651-7), and its Remedy (p. 657-8).
   vi. Gluttony (p. 658-9), and its Remedy (p. 660).
   vii. Lechery (p. 660-8), and its Remedy (p. 668-72).

i. PRIDE (p. 619—626). Its 16 (and more) Twigs. 1. Disobedience, 2. Boasting, 3. Hypocrisy, 4. Despite, 5. Arrogance (p. 619), 6. Impudence, 7. Swelling of Heart (rejoicing in harm done), 8 Insolence, 9. Elation, 10. Impatience, 11. Contumacy, 12.

Presumption, 13. Irreverence, 14. Pertinacity, 15. Vain-glory, 16. Jangling (chattering).

A private kind of pride (the Host's Wife's and Wife of Bath's[1]), wanting to go to offering first, &c. (p. 620).

Two kinds of Pride, *a.* 'within man's heart', *b.* without; *b.* being the sign of *a.*, 'as the gaye leefsel atte Taverne is sign of the wyn that is in the Celer'[2] (p. 620-21), *b.* outside pride.

a. in dear clothing, 1. superfluity of it: its cost, furring, chisel-holes, dragging in the dung, waste of material (p. 621), unfitness for giving to the poor: 2. scantness of it: showing men's privy members, and buttocks (like a she-ape's rump), and the former as half-flayd, in parti-colourd hose[3]. The 'outrageous array of Women' (p. 623).

β. in horses (p. 623), and vicious grooms to tend 'em; plate-harness, &c.

γ. in household: keeping too many retainers or servants, who oppress the poor (p. 624).

δ. in table: not asking the poor to feasts; having burning and ornamented dishes[4]; too costly cups, &c., and too choice minstrelsy (p. 624).

What Pride sins are deadly, and what venial (p. 624).

The Sources of Pride (p. 624): goods of Nature, Fortune, Grace (p. 624). The Folly of Pride in any of these goods of Nature: 'we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and . . of o nature'[5]. The general signs of *Gentleness.* (The flies calld 'bees', and their stingless king) (p. 625); 3 gifts of Grace; 3 of Fortune. The brittleness of popular praise[6] (p. 626).

The Remedy against Pride.

Humility or Meekness, and its 3 kinds: in 1. heart, 2. mouth, 3. works. 4 kinds of each of these (p. 626-27).

ii. Envy (p. 627-30): defined by the Philosopher and St Augustine It springs from Malice (p. 627).

Malice; 2 kinds of: 1. hardness of heart, or recklessness; 2. opposing truth (p. 627).

The 2 kinds of Envy (p. 628): 1. sorrow at other men's prosperity; 2. joy at other men's harm: whence comes

Backbiting; 5 kinds (p. 628): 1. praise with a *but* at the end; 2. turning well-meant things upside down to ill ones; 3. lessening a neighbour's goodness; 4. putting one man above another; 5. glad listening to scandal (p. 628).

Grudging or murmuring (p. 628): 1. against God (p. 629); 2. Murmuring from avarice, 3. from pride, 4. from envy; 5. among Servants, who say 'the Devil's *Paternoster'*; 6. Murmuring from ire or hate: thence, *a.* Bitterness of Heart, *b.* Discord, *c.* Scorning; *d.* Accusing (p. 629); *e.* Malignity (p. 630).

The Remedy against Envy (p. 630-31).

Love of God and one's neighbour. How a man shall love his neighbour. How an enemy is included in the name 'neighbour' (p. 630). 3 Remedies of Love, against 3 deeds of Hate (p. 631). Love is the medicine that casts out the venom of Envy from man's heart (p. 631).

iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its 2 kinds: *a.* good Ire or Wrath (p. 632); *b.* wicked Ire, and its 2 kinds: sudden ire, and ire of malice aforethought (p. 632-33).

Three Shrews that forge in the Devil's furnace: Pride, Envy, and Contumely (p. 633).

[1] Melibe-Monk Link, B. § 11; and General Prologue, A.

[2] Chaucer's father no doubt had a sign outside his wine-shop or tavern in Thames Street, London.

[3] The outspoken and somewhat coarse abuse of the new fashions in dress is a great change from Chaucer's admirable Third-Period chaff of the moral short-comings of the monks and friars, &c., in the Prologue and middle Tales. If this is not change of man, it's change of mood.

[4] Chaucer must have seen plenty of these when he was page, valet, and squire.

[5] Compare Chaucer's *Gentleness*, &c. [6] Compare Clerk's Tale, Part VI, st. 135.

Wrath takes away a man's wit and spiritual life (p. 634).
Fruits of Wrath: 1. Hate. 2. War and wrong. 3. Manslaughter, *a.* spiritual; *b.* bodily (p. 634).
a. The 3 kinds of spiritual Manslaughter (3, calld 6 in MSS. p. 634): 1. by Hate. 2. by Backbiting. 3. Giving wicked Counsel, by Fraud (p. 634).
b. bodily Manslaughter: slaying with your tongue, giving orders or counsel to slay a man (p. 634).
Manslaughter in deed: its 4 (that is, 7) kinds (p. 635): 1. by law: a Justice condemning a man to death; 2. justifiable homicide, in defence of one's own life; 3. by misadventure: shooting an arrow, &c.; 4. a woman overlying her child; 5. a man making a woman barren by drinks, &c., killing the fœtus within her, shedding his seed in the wrong place; a woman killing the child in her womb; 6. a woman killing her child (after birth) for shame; 7. a man by lechery or blows killing a fœtus.
(Sixteen) other sins coming from Ire or Anger.
1. blaming or despising God, as hazarders do (Cp. *Pardoner's Tale*) (p. 635); and those who treat of the Sacrament of the altar irreverently (p. 636).
2. Attry anger: making angry false excuses for sin.
3. Swearing, which dismembers Christ (p. 636).
a. Of lawful Swearing, before a Judge: its 3 conditions, and its motives; *b.* God's name and Christ's, not to be taken in vain (p. 637); *c.* swearing for gentility or manliness (p. 638); *d.* swearing suddenly; *e.* of Adjuration and Conjuration by enchanters and necromancers; *f.* of Divination by Dreams, &c.; *g.* of Charms for Wounds and Maladies (p. 638).
4. Lying (p. 638), and its 6 kinds.
5. Flattering. How Flatterers are the Devil's Nurses, his Enchanters and Chaplains (p. 639).
6. Cursing that comes of irous heart: Malison.
7. Chiding and Reproach (p. 640); (specially a chiding wife[1]) (p. 640-41).
8. Scorning (p. 641).
9. Giving wicked Counsel (p. 641).
10. Sowing and making Discord (p. 642).
11. Double tongue (p. 642).
12. Betraying of Counsel (p. 642).
13. Menace.
14. Idle words.
15. Jangling (chattering) (p. 642).
16. Japing (joking) (p. 642-43).

The Remedy against Anger (p. 643-5). Debonairtee and Patience (p. 643). Four kinds of grievances, and their remedies: 1. wicked words, 2. loss of goods, 3. harm of body, 4. outrageous labour (p. 644).
Incentives to Patience. Story of the Philosopher and Child (p. 644-45). Obedience comes from Patience (p. 645).

iv. Accidie, or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), is an enemy to the 3 states of man,—1. innocence (p. 645), 2. prayer (p. 646), 3. grace;—and to one's livelihood. Its 12 bad consequences (p. 646): 1. Sloth (and its remedy); 2. Dread to begin good works (p. 646); 3. Wanhope, or Despair (and its Remedy) (p. 647); 4. Somnolence (p. 648), and 5. Negligence, or 6. Recklessness, and the Remedy for each; 7. Idleness; 8. *Tarditas*, or tarrying before turning to God (p. 649); 9. Lachesse, or giving up a good work begun; 10. Coldness; 11. Undevotion; 12. Worldly sorrow (p. 649).

The Remedy against Accidie (p. 650-51): Fortitude or Strength, and its 5 kinds. 1. Magnanimity[2] or great Courage; 2. Faith or Hope; 3. Assurance; 4. Magnificence; 5. Constancy (p. 651).

[1] Does Chaucer here refer to his former wife?
[2] Miswritten 'Magnificence' in Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS.

v. Avarice (p. 651-57). The difference between Avarice and Covetousness (p. 651); and between an Idolater and an avaricious man (p. 652). Of Covetousness, and lords' extortion from their bondmen: "humble folk been Cristes freendes" (p. 652-53). The Duty of lords to their thralls or churls. Of those that pillage Holy Church (p. 653-54); lords who plunder the poor are like wolves (p. 654). Of Deceit between Merchant and Merchant (p. 654). Of honest bodily Merchandise (the surplus of one country may be sent to help another) (p. 654). Of spiritual Merchandise, or Simony, and its 2 kinds (p. 655),—thieves that steal Christ's souls get livings (p. 655-56);—Hasardry or Games of Chance (p. 656). Other outcomes of Avarice (p. 656): 1. Lying, 2. Theft (bodily and spiritual) (p. 656-57), 3. False Witness, 4. False Oaths (p. 657).

The Remedy against Avarice (p. 657): Mercy and Pity, and reasonable Liberality (p. 658). Of foolish largess (p. 658).

vi. Gluttony (p. 658-59), and its 5 kinds (p. 659): 1. Drunkenness, or the burial of man's reason; 2. a troubled spirit; 3. bad way of eating; 4. distemperd bodily humours; 5. forgetfulness. Or, as St Gregory says, 1. eating too soon; 2. eating too delicate food; 3. taking too much; 4. troubling too much about cooking food; 5. eating greedily: these are the 5 fingers of the devil's hand (p. 659).

The Remedy against Gluttony (p. 660): Abstinence, and its fellows. Temperance, Shame, Content with plain food, Moderation, Soberness, Sparing (p. 660).

vii. Lechery (p. 660). Its punishment in the Old Testament (p. 660). Adultery, and the desire of it (p. 661-62).

The 5 fingers of the Devil's other hand (p. 662); 1. foolish looking; 2. villainous touching; 3. foul words; 4. kissing (old dotards, and dry dogs at a rose-tree (p. 662); and how a man should love his wife); 5. the stinking deed of lechery (p. 663). Its kinds: 1. Fornication. Taking a maid's maidenhead, or 100th fruit (p. 663). 2. Adultery, defined. 3. Harms following from it: *a.* breaking of faith; *b.* theft (of the wife's body from her husband (Joseph and Potiphar's wife), and of her soul from Christ); *c.* breaking God's commandment, and defouling Christ (p. 664). Of Harlots and Bawds (p. 665). Adultery is set between Theft and Manslaughter. More kinds of Adultery: 1. by Men bound by Religious Vows, &c.; 2. those in Holy Orders (p. 665). Lecherous Priests are like a free Bull in a town, and they eat raw flesh of folk's wives and daughters (p. 666); 3. by man and wife copulating for pleasure only (p. 667); 4. copulation with kinsfolk, spiritual (or godchildren) or fleshly (blood relations). 5. the abominable unmentionable sin; 6. Pollution, of 3 kinds: 1. too rank humours; 2. weakness (p. 667); 3. evil thoughts (p. 668).

The Remedy for Lechery (p. 668): I. Chastity and Continence.

1. in Marriage. (The true effect of Marriage. One husband to have one wife (p. 668). How a man should behave to his wife (p. 669). How the wife should be subject to her husband (p. 669), and be moderate in behaviour, discreet in words, &c. (p. 669-70). The 3 causes for which man and wife may copulate (p. 670): *a.* begetting of children; *b.* to pay the mutual debt of their bodies; *c.* to avoid lechery (p. 670). The 4th cause, pleasure, is deadly sin (p. 670-71).)

2. In Widowhood; 3. Virginity (p. 671).

II. Special avoidance of causes of lechery: *a.* eating and drinking; long sleeping; *b.* the person who'd tempt you (p. 671-72). (I wish I could tell you the Ten Commandments; but it's too high doctrine (p. 672).) [End of *Confession*, § 1, *c.*]

Sin is in heart, mouth, deed, by the 5 Wits (p. 672).

§ 1.*b*. (see p. 615-16.) The 7 Circumstances that encrease or aggravate sins (p. 672). 1. the person who sins (male or female, &c.); 2. the kind of sin (fornication or homicide); 3. the place it was committed in (as in a church, by a priest) (p. 673); 4. for what motive; 5. the number of times it was committed; 6. by what temptation; 7. how it was committed; and all other circumstances (p. 674).

CONFESSION, § 2, § 3 (p. 674-79).

Profitable Confession, and its 4 (= 3) *Conditions* (p. 674):

1. sorrowful bitterness of heart (p. 674); its 5 signs: *a*. shamefastness (like the Publican's) (p. 675); *b*. humility; *c*. fulness of tears (p. 675); *d*. no hesitation (like the Magdalen) for shame; *e*. obedience to receive penance laid on you (p. 675).
2. speedy Confession (p. 676); its 4 Conditions: *f*. that it be well thought over; *g*. the greatness and number of sins must be understood; *h*. the sinner must be contrite, and *i*. avoid occasions of sins.
3. Shrift must be made to one man, not more (p. 676).

True Shrift, and its 10 *Conditions* (p. 677): 1. that it be of free will; 2. that it be lawful (both sinner and priest, Popish); 3. that it be not despairing of Christ's mercy; 4. that a man accuse himself only, and not another; 5. that it be not lying (accusing oneself of sins never committed) (p. 678); that it be by one's own mouth, and not by letter; 7. that the sin be not painted with fair words; 8. that the shrift be to a discreet priest; 9. that the shrift be not made for vain-glory, but for fear of Christ; 10. that the shrift be not made suddenly, for a joke (p. 678). You may be shriven more than once for the same sin; and should be houseld once a year (p. 679).

PART III (*no.* v. *continued, and no.* vi.).

SATISFACTION (THE 3RD REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 679—684).

In *α*. Alms. *β*. bodily punishment.

α. *Alms and its three kinds* (p. 679): 1. Contrition of heart. 2. Pity for one's neighbour's faults. 3. Giving good counsel to other's souls and bodies (food, visits in prison, burial). These Alms should be done privily, if possible (p. 680).

β. *Bodily Punishment* (*Penance*), *of* 4 *kinds:* 1. Prayers (chiefly of the Paternoster, whose expounding I leave to Masters of Theology) (p. 680). 2. Watching, and its 3 kinds: forbearing, *a*. meat and drink, *b*. worldly jollity, and *c*. deadly sin (p. 681). 3. Fasting, and its 4 kinds: Liberality to poor folk; spiritual gladness of heart; not grudging at fasting; reasonable eating. 4. Virtuous teachings, or Discipline: *a*. by word, writing, or example; *b*. by wearing hairshirts., &c, next your skin, scourging yourself, taking evils and injuries patiently (p. 682). [End of no. v. in Part i; p. 593.]

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vi. The 4 Things that disturb Penance [no. vi, or last §, of p. 593 at foot] (p. 682). 1. Dread, and its remedy. 2. Shame, and its remedy. 3. Hope: *a*. of long life, and *b*. consequent over-confidence in Christ's mercy (p. 683). 4. Wanhope, or Despair of Mercy; its 3 kinds: *x*. from great and long continued sin; *y*. from falls-back into sin; *z*. from not being able to persevere in goodness (p. 683).

The fruit of Penance (p. 683-4).

EPILOGUE.

The Author's Leave-taking, and Lament over, and Withdrawal of, his Sinful Books, &c. (p. 684-85).

[*There are no paragraph-breaks or line-numbers in the MS., but Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept in the print for convenience sake.*]

¶ Ier. 6°. State sup*er* vias & videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis que sit via bona et ambulate in ea et inuenietis ¶ refrigeriu*m* a*ni*ma*b*u*s* v*est*ris, &c.

[75]

Owre swete lord god of heuen þat no man wil p*er*ische but wol þat we comen alle to þe knowleche of him and to þe blisful lif þat is p*er*durable / [76] ammonestith vs by þe p*ro*phet Ieremye þat saith in þis wise [77] ¶ Stondeth vpon þe weyes and seeþ & axeþ of olde pathes þat is to sayn of old sentence which is þe good way. [78] [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] and ȝe schul fynde refresshyng for ȝoure soules &c. [79] ¶ Many ben þe wayes espirituels þat leden folk to oure lord Ihū c*rist*/. and to þe regne of glorie. [80] Of whiche weyes þer is a ful noble way and ful couenable which may not faile to man ne to wo*m*man þat þorugh synne haþ mysgon fro þe right way of Ier*usalem* celestial [81] and þis wey is cleped penitence ¶ Of which me*n* schulden gladly herken and enquere wiþ al here herte [82] to wyte what is penitence and whens it is cleped penitence and in what maner and in how many maners been þe acciones or workynges of penaunce [83] and how many spieces ben of penitences & whiche þinges apperteynen and byhouen to penitence. and whiche þinges destourben penitence

[84] ¶ Seint' ambrose saiþ. þat' penitence is þe pleynyng [1]of' man for þe gult' þat' he haþ doon. and no more to do ony þing' for which him oughte to pleigne [85] ¶ And som doctour saith. penitence is waymentynyge of' man þat' sorweþ for his synne and peyneþ himself' for he haþ mysdoon [86] ¶ Penitence wiþ certeyn circumstaunces: is verray repentaunce of' man þat holt' himself' in sorwe and in woo for his giltes [87] ¶ And for he schal be verray penitent: he schal first/ bywaile þe synnes þat' he haþ do and stedfastly purposen in his hert to hauen schrifte of' mouth. and to doon satisfaccioun [88] and neuer to do þing' for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne. and to continue in goode werkes or elles his repentaunce may nouȝt' auayle [89] For as saith seint Isidre ¶ he is a iapere and a gabbere and no verray repentaunt' þat' eft' soone doþ þing' for which him oughte to repente: [90] wepynge. and nouȝt for to stynte to doon synne may nouȝt' auayle [91] ¶ But naþeles men schal hope þat' at' euery tyme þat men fallith. be it' neuer so ofte: þat' he may arise þorugh penitence if' he haue grace ¶ But' certeyn it is a gret doute. [92] For as saith seint Gregory. Vnneþe arist' he out of' his synne þat is charged wiþ þe charge of' yuel vsage [93] ¶ And þerfore repentaunt folk' þat' stinte for to synne and forlete synne er þat synne forlete hem. holy chirche holt' hem siker of' her sauacioun. [94] And he þat synneth and verraily repentith him in his last' ende: holy chirche ȝit hopeþ his sauacioun by þe grete mercy of' oure lord iħū crist/ for his repentaunce. but' take þe siker way

[95] ¶ And now siþ þat' I haue declared ȝow what þing' is penitence. now schul ȝe vnderstonde þat' þer ben þre acciouns of' penitence [96] ¶ The first' is þat' if' a man be baptiȝed after þat' he haþ synned. [97] Seint augustyn saith but if' he be penitent' for his olde synful lif': he may not' bygynne þe newe

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clene lif' [98] ¶ For certes if' he be baptiȝed wiþoute penitence of' his olde gilt'. he receyueth þe mark' of' baptisme: but nouȝt þe grace ne þe remissio*un* of' his sy*n*nes til he haue repentau*n*ce verray [99] ¶ Anoþ*er* defaute is þis þ*at*' men doon deedly synne after þat' þay haue receyued baptisme [100] ¶ þe þridde defaute is þat' men fallen in to venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. [101] þer of' saiþ seint austyn ¶ That' penitence of' goode me*n* and of' humble [1]folk' is þe penite*n*s of' euery day

[102] ¶ The spices of' penitence ben thre ¶ That' oon of' hem is solempne ¶ Anoþ*er* is comune ¶ And þe þridde is pryue [103] ¶ Thilke pena*u*nce þat is solempne is i*n* tuo maners as is to be put' out' of' holy chirche in lente for slauȝtr*e* of' childre and such maner þing' [104] ¶ Anoþer is whan a man haþ synned openly. of' which synne þe fame is openly spoken in þe contre. and þanne holy chirche by iuggement' streyneth him to doon open penaunce [105] ¶ Comune penau*n*ce is þat' prestes enioynen men comunly in certeyn caas. as for to goon p*er* aduenture naked in pilgrimage or barfot' [106] ¶ Priue penaunce is þilk' þat men doon alday for priue synnes of' whiche we schryue vs p*ri*uely and receyuen priue penaunce

[107] ¶ Now schalt' þou vnderstonde what' bihoueth and is necessarie to verray p*ar*fyt' penitence. and þis stondith in þre þinges [108] ¶ Contricio*un* of' hert' ¶ Confessio*un* of' mouth ¶ And satisfaccion. [109] ¶ For whiche saith seint' Ioh*an* Crisostom ¶ penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely eu*er*y peyne þat' him is enioyned with contricio*un* of' herte and schrift' of' mouth with satisfaccioun and in werking' of' all*e* maner humblete [110] and þis is fruytful penitence. agayn þre þinges in whiche we wraþþe our lord iħū *crist*/. [111] þis is to sayn by delit in þinking' ¶ By rechelesnes in speking' ¶ By wicked synful werkyng' [112] ¶ Again þese

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þre wickid gultes is penitence þat' may be likned vnto a tre [113] ¶ The roote of' þis tre is contricio*un* þat' hydiþ him in þe hert/ of' him þat' is verray repenta*un*t ¶ Right' as þe roote of' a tree hideþ him in þe eorþe. [114] of' þe roote of' contricio*un* springeth a stalk' þat' bereth braunches and leeues of' confessio*un* and fruyt' of' satisfaccio*un* [115] ¶ For whiche c*ri*st saith in his gospel ¶ Doth digne fruyt' of' penitence. For by þis fruyt' may men knowe þis tree and nouȝt' by þe roote þat' is hyd in þe hert' of' a man ne by þe braunches ne the leuys of' confessio*un* [116] ¶ And þ*er*fore oure lord ihū c*ri*st' saiþ þus ¶ By þe fruyt' of' hem schul ȝe knowe hem [117] ¶ Of' þis roote eek' springeþ a seed of' grace. þe which seed is mooder of' sikurnes ¶ And þis seed is egre and hoot [118] ¶ The grace of' þis seed springeth of' god þorugh remembrau*n*ce of' þe day of' doom and of' þe peynes of' helle [119] ¶ Of' þis matier saith Salomon þat' in þe drede of' god man forleteth his synne [120] [1]¶ The hete of' þis seed is þe loue of' god & þe desiring' of' þe ioye p*er*durable [121] ¶ þis hete draweth þe hert of' man to god and doþ him hate his synne [122] ¶ For soþe þer is no þing' þat serueþ so wel to a child as þe mylk' of' his norice ¶ Ne no þing' is to hi*m* more abhominable þan þe milk' whan it is melled mete. [123] ¶ Right' so þe synful man þat/ loueþ his synne. him semeth it is to him most' swete of' eny þing' [124] ¶ But' fro þat' tyme he loueþ sadly oure lord ihū c*ri*st' and desireþ þe lif' p*er*durable. þer nys to him no þing' more abhominable / [125] for soþly þe lawe of' god is þe loue of' god ¶ For which Dauyd saith ¶ I haue loued þy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate ¶ he þ*at*' loueþ god kepeth his lawe and his word [126] ¶ This tree saugh the p*ro*phete daniel in spirit' vpon þe auysio*un* of' Nabugodonosor whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. [127] ¶ Penaunce is tre of' lif' to hem þat' it' receyuen and þ*at* holdeth hi*m*

Dilexi legem tuam &c.

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in verray penitence is blessed after þe sentence of Salomon

[128] In þis penitence or contricioun men schal vnderstonde foure þinges that is to sayn what is contricioun and whiche ben þe causes þat moeuen men to contricioun and how he schulde be contrit and what contricioun auaileth to þe soule [129] ¶ þanne it is þus þat contricioun is þe verray sorwe þat a man receyueþ in his herte for his synnes wiþ sad purpos to schryue him and to doo penaunce and neuer more to don synne. [130] ¶ And þis sorwe schal be in þis maner as saith seint Bernad ¶ It schal ben heuy and greuous and ful scharp and poynaunt in herte [131] ¶ First for man haþ agilted his lord and his creatour and more scharp and poynaunt. For he haþ agiltid his fader celestial. [132] and ȝit more scharp and poynaunt for he haþ wratthed and agilt him þat bouȝt him wiþ his precious blood and haþ delyuered vs fro þe bondes of synne and fro þe cruelte of þe deuel and fro þe peynes of helle //

[133] ¶ þe causes þat oughten to moeue a man to contricioun ben .vj. ¶ First a man schal remembre him of his synnes. [134] but loke þat þilke remembrance be to no delyt of him by no way but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob. saith þat synful men doon werkes worþy of confessioun [135] and þerfor saith Eȝechiel ¶ I wol remembre alle þe ȝeres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn hert. [136] and god saith in thapocalips. [1]Remembre ȝow from whens þat ȝe ben falle. For biforn þat tyme þat ȝe synned. ȝe were þe children of god [. . . . . *no gap*] [137] ¶ But for ȝoure synne ȝe be woxe þral and foul and membres of þe feend. hate of aungels. sclaunder of holy chirche & foode of þe fals serpent. perpetual matier of þe fuyr of helle [138] ¶ and ȝet more foule and abhominable For ȝe trespassen so ofte tyme as doþ þe hound þat torneþ to ete his spewyng. [139] & ȝet

¶ Sex sunt cause que mouent homines ad contricionem

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ȝe ben fouler for ȝoure longe continuyng' in synne and ȝoure synful vsage. for whiche ȝe ben roten in ȝoure synne as a beest' in his donge [140] ¶ Suche maner of' þoughtes make a man haue schame of' his synne and no delit. and god saiþ by þe prophete Iȝechiel [141] ¶ ȝe schul remembre ȝow of' ȝoure weyes. & þay schal displese ȝow soþly ¶ Synnes ben þe way þat' leden folk' to helle

[142] ¶ The secounde cause þat' oughte make a man to haue desdeyn of' his synne is þis. þat' as seiþ seint petre / ¶ who so doth synne is þral of' synne. and synne put a man in gret' þraldom. [143] and þerfore saith þe prophete. Eȝechiel. I wente sorwful in desdeyn of' myself' ¶ Certes wel oughte a man haue desdeyn of' synne and wiþdrawe him fro þat' þraldom and vilonye. [144] and lo what' saiþ Seneca. in þis matiere. he saiþ þus ¶ Though I wiste þat' god nere god. man schulde neuer knowe it': ȝit' wold I haue disdeyn for to do synne [145] and þe same Seneca also saith ¶ I am born to gretter þinges þan to be þral to my body or þan for to make of' my body a þral [146] ¶ Ne a fouler þral may no man ne womman make of' his body þan ȝiue his body to synne [147] ¶ And were it' þe foulest' cherl or þe foulest' wonman þat' lyueþ and lest' of' value? ȝet' is þanne synne more foul and more in seruitute [148] Euer fro þe heigher dege þat' man falliþ þe more he is þral and more to god vile and abhominable [149] ¶ O goode god wel oughte a man haue gret disdayn o such a þing' þat' þorugh synne þer he was free now is he maked bonde. [150] an þerfore saiþ seint austyn ¶ If' þou hast' disdayn [. . . *no gap*] þat' þou þiself' schuldest' doon synne? haue þou þanne desdeyn þat' þou þiself' schuldist' do synne. [151] tak' reward of' þy value þat' þou be nouȝt' to foul in þiself' [152] Allas wel oughte men haue disdeyn to be

seruauntes & þralles to synne. & sore ben aschamed of hemself [153] þat god of his endeles [1]goodnes haþ set hem in heigh estate or ȝeuen hem witte. strengþ of body. hele. beaute. prosperite. [154] and bought hem fro þe deþ wiþ his herte blood þat þay so vnkyndely aȝeinst his gentilesce quyten so vileynsly to slauȝter of her oughne soules [155] ¶ O goode god ȝe wommen þat ben of so gret beaute remembreþ ȝow of þe prouerbe of Salamon þat saith. [156] he likeneth a fair womman þat is a fool of hir body. to a ryng of gold þat were in þe groyn of a sowe [157] ¶ For right as a sowe wroteþ in euerich ordure: so wrootith sche hir beaute in stynkyng ordure of synne

[158] ¶ The þridde cause þat ouȝte moeue a man to contricioun is drede of þe day of doome. & of þe orrible peynes of helle [159] ¶ For as seint Ierom saith. At euery tyme þat I remembre of þe day of doom: I quake [160] ¶ For whan I ete or drinke or what so þat I doo euer semeth me þat þe trompe sowneþ in myn eere. [161] Riseth ȝe vp þat ben deede / and comeþ to þe Iuggement [162] ¶ O goode god. mochil ought a man to drede such a iuggement. þer as we schul be alle as seiþ seint poul Biforn þe sete of our lord iħū crist [163] wher as he schal make a general congregacioun wher as no man may ben absent. [164] for certes þer auayleþ non essoyne ne excusacioun [165] ¶ And nouȝt oonly þat oure defaute schal be [. . . . . *no gap*] openly knowen. [166] and as seint Bernard saiþ ¶ Ther schal no pleynyng auayle ne no sleight ¶ we schuln ȝiue rekenyng of euery ydel word [167] ¶ Ther schulle we haue a Iuge þat may nouȝt be disceyued ne corupt. and why: For certes alle oure þoughtes ben descouered as to him ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not / be corupt [168] ¶ And þerfor saiþ Salamon ¶ The wraþþe of god ne wol not be corrupt ¶ And þerfor saiþ Salomon ¶ The wraþ of

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god ne wol nouȝt spare no wight for praier ne for ȝifte ¶ And *þer*fore at þe day of doome þer is noon hope to eshcape [169] wherfor as seint anselm seiþ ¶ Ful greet anguisch schuln þe synful folk haue at þat tyme [170] ¶ þere schal þe sterne and þe wroþ Iugge sitte aboue and vnder him þe horrible put of helle open to destroye him þat mot byknowe his synnes which synnes openly ben schewed byforn god and biforn euery creature [171] ¶ and on þe lift syde mo deuelis þan herte may þynke for to hary and to drawe þe synful to pyne of helle [172] ¶ And wiþinne þe hertes of folk schal be þe byty*ng* [1]conscience and wiþoute forþ schal be þe world al brennyng [173] ¶ whider schal þanne þe wrecche synful ma*n*. Flee to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him. he moot come forþ and schewe him [174] ¶ For certes as seith sey*nt* Ierom ¶ The erþe schal caste him out/ of him and þe see also and þe aer also þat schal be ful of þunder-clappes and lightny*nges* [175] ¶ Now soþly who-so wel remembrith him of þese tydynges? I gesse his synne schal not torne him to delit but/ to gret sorw for drede of þe peyne of helle. [176] and *þer*fore saiþ Iob. to god ¶ Suffre lord þat I may a while biwayle and wepe or I go wiþ oute retourny*n*ge to þe derk lond couered wiþ derknes of deþ [177] to þe lond of mysese and of derknesse wher as is þe schadow of deth. wher as is noon order [ne] ordina*un*ce but grislich drede þat euer schal last [178] ¶ loo her may ȝe see þat Iob prayde respit a while to wepe and biwayle his trespas ¶ For forsoþe oon day of respit is bettre þan al þe tresor in þis world. [179] and for as moche as a ma*n* may aquyte himself byforn god by penau*n*ce in þis world and not by tresor? *þer*fore schuld he p*ra*ye to god ȝiue him respit a while to wepe and to waile his trespas. [180] for certes al [. . . . . *no gap*]

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þe world nys but a litel þing at regard of þe sorwe of helle [181] ¶ The cause why þat Iob. calleþ helle þe lond of derknes: [182] vnderstondith þat he clepith it lond or eorþe for it is stable and neuer schal fayle. derk: for he *þat* is *in* helle hat defaut/ of light material. [183] for certes þe derke light þat schal come out of þe fuyr þat euer schal bre*n*ne / schal torne him to peyne þat is in helle for it schewiþ him to þorrible deueles þat him tormenten [184] couered wiþ the derknes of deth þat is to sayn þat he þat is in helle schal haue defaute of þe sight of god ¶ For certes þe sight of god is þe lif *per*durable. [185] þe derknes of deth ben þe synnes þat þe wrecchid ma*n* haþ doon whiche þat stourben him to see þe face of god right as a derk cloude doþ bitwixe vs and þe sonne [186] ¶ lond of myseyse: By cause þat þere ben þre maner of defautes agains þre þinges þat folk of þis world han in þis p*re*sent lif þat is to sayn. honures. delices. and richesses [187] ¶ Agayns hono*urs*. han þey in helle / schame and confusio*un*. [188] For wel ȝe witen þat me*n* clepyn honure þe reu*er*ence *þat* men doon to þe ma*n*. but in helle is [1]noon hono*ur* ne reu*er*ence. for certes no more reuerence schal ben doon to a kyng *þa*n to a knaue [189] ¶ For which god saiþ by þe p*ro*phete Ieremie ¶ Thilke folk/ *þat* me displesen schul be despit [190] ¶ Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. þere schal no wight s*er*uen oþir but of harm and of torme*n*t ¶ honour eek is cleped gret dignite and heighnes: but in helle schulle þay be al fortrode of deueles [191] ¶ And god saith. thorrible deueles schuln goon and comen vpon þe heedes of da*m*pned folk. And þis is for als moche as þe heyher þat þay were *in* þis p*re*sent lif: þe more schuln þay ben abatid and defouled in helle [192] ¶ Agayns riches of þis world schuln þay han mysese of pouert. A þis pouert schal be in .iiij. þinges [193] In defaut of tresor of which as

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dauid saith ¶ The riche folk' þat' embraseden and onedin in al here herte þe tresor of' þis world. schuln slepen in þe slepyng' of' deth and no þing' schuln þay fynde in her hondes of' al her tresor [194] ¶ & more-ouer þe mysease of' helle schal be in þe defaut of' mete and drink'. [195] For god saith þus by moyses ¶ Thay schul be wasted by hunger and þe briddes of' helle schuln deuoure he*m* wiþ bittir teeth and þe galle of' þe drago*u*n schal be her drink' & þe venym of' þe drago*u*n here morsels [196] ¶ And forþ*er* more ouer her misease schal be in defaut' of' cloþ*in*g/ for þay schul be naked in body as of' cloþ*in*g ¶ For þay schuln be nakid of' body saue of' fuyr i*n* which þay brenne and oþer filþis. [197] and naked schuln þay be of' soule. of' all*e* maner ve*r*tues which þat is cloþing' of' soule ¶ wher ben þa*n*ne þe gaye robes. and þe softe scheetis and þe smale schirtes. [198] lo what' saiþ of' hem þe p*r*ophete Isaye ¶ vnder hem schuln be strawed motthis and here couertours schuln ben of' wormes of' helle [199] ¶ And forþ*er* mor ou*er* here disease schal be in defaute of' frendes. for he is not pouere that haþ goode frendes. but' here is no frend. [200] For neyþ*er* god ne no creature schal be frend vnto hem. and euerich of' he*m* schal hate oþer wiþ dedly hate [201] ¶ The sones and the douȝtres schuln rebellen agayns þe fader and þe mooder and kynrede agayns kynrede and chiden and despisen euerich of' hem oþer boþe day and nigh̃t. as god saith by þe p*r*ophete Michias [202] ¶ And þe louyng' childre*n* þat' whilom [1]loueden so fleisschliche eu*er*ych oþer? wolden eu*er*ych of' hem eten oþer if' þay miȝten [203] for how schulden þay louen hem togider i*n* þe peyne of' helle? whan þay hated eu*er*ych of' hem oþ*er* in þe p*r*osp*er*ite of' þis lif'. [204] For trustith wel her fleisshly loue was dedly hate as saiþ þe p*r*oph*et*e dauid. who-so þat' loueth wickidnes hateþ his soule. [205] And who-so hatiþ his oughne soule. certis he may loue noon oþer wight'

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in no manere [206] ¶ And *þer*fore in helle is no solace ne frendschipe. but euer þe more flesshly kynredes *þat* ben in helle? þe more cursyng*es* þe more chydynges and þe more deedly hate þer is amo*ng* hem [207] And forþer ouer þay schul haue defaute of alle manere delices ¶ For certis delices ben þe appetites of þy fyue wittes as sight hieryng. smellyng. sauoring and touching [208] ¶ But *in* helle here sight schal be ful of derknesse / and of smoke and *þer*fore ful of teeris. and her hieryng ful of waymenty*n*ge and of gruntynge of teeth as saiþ iħū crist // [209] ¶ here nose þurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk. and as saith ysaye þe p*r*ophete ¶ here sauoringe schal be ful of bitter galle. [210] and touchyng of al here body y-couered with fuyr *þat* neuer schal quenche / and wiþ wormes *þat* neuer schuln deyen / as god saiþ by þe mouþ of ysaie [211] ¶ And for al so moche as þay schuln nouȝt/ wene/ *þat* þay may deyen for peyne / and by here deth fle fro peyne. *þat* may þay vnderstonde *in* þe word of Iob / *þat* saiþ ¶ Ther as is þe schadow of deth [212] ¶ Certes a schadow haþ þe liknesse of the þing of which it is a schadow. [. . . . . *no gap*] [213] Right so fareth þe peyne of helle. it is lik deþ. for þe horrible anguisshe. And why? for it peyneþ hem euer as though me*n* scholden deye anon. But certes þay schul not deye. [214] For as saith S*eint* G*re*G*ory* ¶ To wrecchid caytifs shal be ȝiue deth wiþoute deth and ende wiþouten ende / and defaute withouten faylinge. [215] For here deth schal alway lyuen. and here ende schal euermore bygynne. and here defaute schal not fayle [216] ¶ And *þer*for saiþ seint Ioh*an* þe eu*au*ngelist ¶ þay schul folwe deþ. and þay schuln nouȝt fynde him. and þay schul desire to deyen And deth schal flee fro he*m*. [217] ¶ and eek Iob. saiþ. *þat* *in* helle is noon ordre of rule [218] ¶ And al be it *þat* god haþ creat al þing in right ordre and no þing wiþ-

oute ordre. but [1]alle þinges ben ordeyned and noumbred: ȝit naþeles þay þat ben dampned been nouȝt in ordre ne holden non ordre [219] For þe eorþe schal bere hem no fruyt [220] ¶ For as þe prophete dauid saiþ. God schal destroye þe fruyt of þe eorþe as for hem. ne watir schal ȝiue hem no moysture ne þe aier non refreisching. ne fuyr no light. [221] For as seiþ seint Basile ¶ The brennyng of þe fuyr of þis world schal god ȝiue in helle to hem þat ben dampnyd. [222] But þe light and þe clernesse / schal be ȝeue to heuene to his children. Right as þe goode man ȝeue fleisch to his children and bones to his houndes / [223] ¶ And for þay schul haue noon hope to eschape. saiþ seint Iob. atte laste þat þer schal horrour and grisly drede duelle wiþouten ende [224] ¶ horrour is alway drede of harm þat is to come. and þis drede schal euer duelle in þe hertes of hem þat ben dampnyd. And þerfore han þay lorn al here hope for vij. causes [225] ¶ First / for god þat is here Iugge schal be wiþoute mercy to hem ne þay may not please him ne noon of his halwes Ne þey may ȝiue no þing for here raunsoun / [226] ne þay haue no voice to speke to him. ne þay may not fle fro peyne. ne þay haue no goodnes in hem. þat þay may schewe to deliuere hem fro peyne [227] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salomon / The wikked man deyeth. and whan he is deed: he schal haue noon hope to eschape fro peyne [228] ¶ who-so wolde þanne wel vnderstonde þese peynes and bythynk him wel þat he haþ deserued þilke peynes for his synnes ¶ Certes he schulde haue more talent to sikyn and to wepe þan for to synge or pleye [229] ¶ For as þat Salamon saiþ ¶ who-so þat þe science to knowe þe peynes þat ben establid and ordeynt for synne: he wolde make sorwe [230] ¶ Thilke science as saiþ seint austyn makeþ a man to wayment in his herte

[231] ¶ The fourþe poynt þat oughte make a man

[1 *leaf* 256, *back*]

haue contricio*un* is þe sorwful reme*m*br*au*nce of' þe good þ*at*' he hath left' to doon heer in eorþe. and eek' þe good þ*at*' he haþ lorn [232] ¶ Soþly þe goode werkes þ*at*' he hath left'? eyþ*er* þay been þe goode werkes þ*at*' he wrought' er he fel in to deedly synne? or elles þai ben þe goode werkes þ*at*' he [. . . . . [233] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] dede er he fel into synne ben amortised. and astoneyed and dullid by ofte synnynge. [234] þ*at*' oþ*er*e goode werkes that he wrouȝte whil he lay in dedly synne been outrely deede [1]as to þe lif' p*er*durable in heuen. [235] þanne þilke goode werkes þ*at*' ben mortified by ofte synnyng' whiche goode werkes he dede whiles he was in charite ne mowe neu*er* quyken agayn w*ith*out*en* v*er*ray penitence. [236] And þ*er*of' saith god by þe mouth of' Eȝechiel ¶ That' if' þe rightful ma*n* retourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse. schal he liue? [237] nay. For all*e* þe goode werkes þ*at*' he haþ wrought' ne schuln neuer be in rememb*r*ance for he schal dye in his synne. [238] And vpon þilke chapit*re* saith seint Gregory þus. þ*at*' we schuln vnderstonde þis p*r*incipally. [239] That' whan we doon dedly synne it is for nouȝt þanne to reherse or to drawe i*n* to memorie þe goode werkes þ*at*' we han wrought' biforn. [240] For certis in þe werkyng' of' þe dedly synne þer is no trust' to no good werkes that' we han don biforne þis tyme. þ*at*' is to say as for to haue þerby þe lif' p*er*durable in heuen. [241] But' naþeles þe goode werkes quiken agayn and comen again and helpen and auailen to haue þe lif' p*er*durable i*n* heuen whan we han contricio*un* [242] ¶ But' soþly þe goode werkes þ*at*' me*n* doon whil þ*at* þ*ai* ben i*n* deedly synne. for as moche as þay were doon i*n* dedly synne? þay may neuer quyken [. . [243] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ And al be it þ*at*' þay auailen not' to haue þe lif' perdurable? ȝit' auaylen

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þay to abbrigging' of' þe peyne of' helle or elles to gete temporal riches. [244] Or elles þat' god wol þe raþer enlumyne and lightene þe hert' of' þe synful man to haue repentau*n*ce. [245] and eek' þey auailen for to vsen a man to do goode werkes þ*at*' þe feend haue þe lasse power of' his soule. [246] ¶ And þus þe curteys lord iħū *crist*' ne wolde nouȝt' no good werk' be lost'. For in som what' it schal auaile. [247] But' for als moche as þe goode werkes þat men don whil þay ben i*n* good lif' ben amortised by synne folwyng' and eek' sith þ*at*' alle the goode werkes þat' men doon whil þay ben in dedly synne been outrely deede as for to haue þe lif' p*er*durable: [248] wel may þat' man þat' no goode werkes werkiþ synge þilke newe freisch song'. Iay tout' p*er*du mo*un* temps et mo*un* labo*ur* [249] For certis synne byreueth a man boþe goodnes of' nature and eek' þe goodnes of' g*r*ace [250] ¶ For soþly þe g*r*ace of' þe holy gost' fareþ lik fyre þat' may not' ben ydel. For fuyr as it forletiþ his werkyng' it faileth anoon ¶ And right' so whan þe g*r*ace faileþ: [251] þan lesith þe synful ma*n* þe goodnes of' glorie þat' oonly is byhight [1]to goode men þat labouren and werken [252] ¶ wel may he be sory þ*a*nne þ*at*' oweth al his lif' to god as longe as he haþ lyued and eek' as longe as he schal lyue. þ*at* no goodnes ne hath to paye wiþ his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lyf'. [253] For trusteþ wel he schal ȝiue accompt' as saiþ seint Bernard of' alle þe goodes þat' han be ȝeuen hi*m* in þis present lif'. & how he hath hem dispendid. [254] nat' so moche þat þer ne schal not p*er*ische an heer of' his heed ne a moment' of' an hour ne schal not' p*er*ische of his tyme þ*at*' he ne schal ȝiue of' it a rekeny*n*g.

[255] ¶ The .v^te^. maner of' contricio*un* þ*at*' moeueþ a man þ*er*to is þe remembrau*n*ce of' þe passiou*n* þ*at*' oure lord ihū c*r*ist' suffred for. vs and for our synnes [256] ¶ For as seiþ seint Bernard whil þ*at*' I lyue I schal haue remem-

[1 *leaf* 257, *back*]

*br*aunce of þe passio*un* þat oure lord ihū *crist* suffred for vs in preching. [257] his werynesse *in tra*uayling his temptac*ioun* whan he fastid. his longe wakinges whan he prayde his teeres whan he wepte for pite of good peple [258] þe wo and þe schame and þe filthe þat men saide to him ofte foul spittyng þat men spitten on his face. Of þe buffettis þat men ȝaf him of þe foule mowes and of þe reproues *þat* men to him saiden [259] of þe nayles with whiche he was nayled to þe cros and of al þe remenau*nt* of his passio*un* þat he suffred for my synnes and no *þing* for his gilt [260] ¶ And ȝe schal vnderstonde þat *in* ma*n*nes synne is euery maner ordre of ordinau*n*ce turned vpso-dou*n*. [261] ¶ For it is soþ þat god & resou*n* and sensualite and þe body of man be so ordeyned that eu*e*rich of þese .iiij. schulde haue lordschipe ouer [. . [262] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] resou*n* and resou*n* ouer sensualite. and sensualite ouer þe body of ma*n*. [263] ¶ But soþly whan ma*n* synneþ al þis ordre or ordinau*n*ce is torned vpso-dou*n* [264] and þa*n*ne for as moche as þe resou*n* of a ma*n* ne wol not be subiect ne obeissant to god þat is his lord by right: *per*fore lesith it þe lordschipe þat it schulde haue in sensualite and eek ouer þe body of man. [265] And why: For sensualite rebellith þanne agayns resou*n*. And by þat way lesith resou*n* þe lordschipe ouer sensualite and ouer þe body. [266] For right as resoun is rebel to god: Right so is boþe sensualite rebel to resou*n* and þe body also [267] And certis þis disordynau*n*ce and þis rebellio*un* oure lord ihū *crist* bought vpon his *pre*cious body ful deere ¶ And herkeneth *in* which wise [268] [1]¶ For as moche as resou*n* is rebel to god: *per*fore is ma*n* worþy to haue sorwe and to be deed. [269] þis suffred oure lord ihū *crist* for ma*n* and after þat he was bytraysed of his disciple and destreyned and

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bounde so þat þe blood brast out at euery nayl of his hondes as saith seint austyn [270] ¶ And forþer ouer for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensualite whan it may þerfore is man worþy to haue schame ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for man whan þay spitten in his face [271] And forþer ouer þanne for as moche as þe caytif body of man is rebelle boþe to resoun and to sensualite. þerfore it is worþy þe deth [272] ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for vs vpon þe croys wher as þer was no part of his body fre wiþoute gret peyne and bitter passioun [273] ¶ And al þis suffred ihū crist þat neuer forfeted. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] So mochil am I streyned for þe þinges þat I neuer deseruyd and to moche defouled for schendschip þat man is worthy to haue [274] And þerfore may þe synful man wel saye as saith sent Bernard ¶ Acursed be þe bitternesse. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [275] For certis after þe dyuers discordaunces of oure wickednes was þe passioun of oure lord ihū crist/ ordeyned in diuers þinges [276] ¶ As þus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid of þe deuel by coueitise of temporal prosperite and scorned by disceyt whan he cheseþ fleischly delytes and ȝit is it tormentid by impacience of aduersite and byspit by seruage and subieccioun of synne. and atte last it is slayn finally [277] ¶ For þis discordaunce of synful man was Ihū crist first bytraised and after was he bounde that com for to vnbynden vs fro synne and of peyne [278] ¶ Than was he scorned þat oonly schulde be honoured in alle þing of alle þinges. [279] ¶ Than was his visage þat oughte be desired to be say of al man-kynde. In which visage aungels desiren to loke vileynsly byspit. [280] Thanne was he scorned þat no þing had agilt. and fynally þanne was he crucified and slayn [281] Thanne was accomplised þe

word of' ysaye ¶ He was woundid for oure mysdede and defouled by oure felonyes [282] ¶ Now sith ihū *crist'* tok' vpon him þilke peyne of' alle oure wikkednes: Mochil oughte synful men wepe and bywayle þat' for his synnes schulde goddes sone of' heuene al þis endure [283] ¶ The .vj^te^. þing' þat ouȝte to moeue a man to contricioun is þe hope of' þre þinges. þat' is to sayn. forȝeuenes of' synne and þe ȝifte of' *grace* wel [1]for to do. and þe glorie of' heuen wiþ which god schal guerdoun man for his goode deedis [284] ¶ And for als moche as ihū *crist'* ȝeueth vs þese ȝiftes of' his largesse and of' his souerayn bounte: þerfore is he cleped. Ihc naȝarenus rex Iudeorum [285] ¶ Ihū is for to say saueour or sauacioun of' whom me schal hope to haue forȝeuenes of' synnes which þat is proprely sauacioun of' synnes [286] ¶ And þerfore seyde þe aungel to Ioseph ¶ Thow clepe his name Ihc þat' schal saue his poeple of' here synnes [287] ¶ And her of' saith Seint' petir ¶ Ther is noon oþer name vnder heuen þat' is ȝeue to any man by which a man may be sauyd. but' oonly Ihc [288] naȝarenus is as moche to say as florisching' in which a man schal hope þat' he þat' ȝeueth him remissioun of' synnes schal ȝiue him grace wel wel to doo ¶ For in þe flour is hope of' fruyt / in tyme comynge. And in forȝiuenes hope of' grace wel to do [289] ¶ I was at' þe dore of' þin herte saiþ Ihc and cleped for to entre. he *þat'* openith to me. schal haue forȝeuenes of' synne. [290] I wol entre into him by my grace and soupe with him by þe goode workes þat he schal doon whiche werkes ben þe foode of' god ¶ And he schal soupe wiþ me by þe grete ioye þat I schal ȝiue him [291] ¶ Thus schal man hope þat' for his werkis of' penaunce god schal ȝiue him his regne as he bihetith him in þe gospel

[292] Now schal man vnderstonde in what'

[1 *leaf* 258, *back*]

maner schal be his contricio*un* ¶ I say it schal be vniuersal and total ¶ þis is to say. a ma*n* schal be verray repenta*un*t' for alle his synnes þat' he haþ doon in delyt' of' his þought' for delit' is ful p*er*ilous [293] ¶ For þer ben tuo maners of' consentynge [. . . . . *no gap*] of' affeccio*un* whan a man is moeued to synne & delitith him longe for to þinke on þat' synne. [294] and his resoun aparceyueth wel þat' it is synne agayns þe lawe of' god. & ȝit his reso*un* refreyneþ not' his foule delit' or talent' þough he seth wel apertly þat' it is aȝenst'/ þe reue*r*ence of' god al þough his reso*un* consente not to do þe synne in dede? [295] ȝit sayn some doctours delyt' þat' duellith longe it is ful p*er*ilous al be it neuer so lite [296] ¶ And also a ma*n* schulde sorwe namely for al þat' he haþ desired agayn þe lawe of' god wiþ p*ar*fyt consentynge of' his hert and of' his reso*un* ¶ For þ*er*of' is no doute þat it is dedly synne [297] [. . . . . *no gap*] þat it nas first' in mannes þought. & after þ*at*' in his delit/ and so forþ in to consentyng' and in to dede [298] ¶ wherfore say I þat' many men repente hem neuer [1]of' suche þoughtes and delitis. ne neuer schriue hem of' hit. but' oonly of' þe dede of' grete synnes outward [299] ¶ wherfore I say þat' suche wickid delitis and wickid þouȝtes ben subtile bigilours of' hem þat' schuln be dampned [300] ¶ More ouer ma*n* oughte to sorwe for his wicked wordes as wel as his wikked dedes. For certis þe repentaunce of' a singuler synne & nouȝt' repente of' alle his oþer synnes [. . . . . *no gap*] may nouȝt auaile [301] ¶ For certis god almighty is al good and þ*er*fore he forȝeueth al or elles right' nouȝt [302] ¶ And here-of' seiþ seint' augusti*n* ¶ I wot certeynly þat' god is enemy to eu*er*y synnere [303] ¶ And how þ*an*ne he þat obs*er*uith oon synne schal he haue remissio*un* of' þe

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remenant' of' his oþer synnes? Nay. [304] And forþer ouer contricioun schulde be woundes sorwful and anguisschous and þerfore ȝiueth him god pleinly his mercy ¶ And þerfore whan my soule was anguissheous wiþinne me? I hadde remembraunce of' god þat' my prayer mighte come to him [305] ¶ And forþer ouer. contricioun moste be continuelly and þat' a man haue stedefast' purpos to schryue him and for to amende him of' his lyf' [306] ¶ For soþly whil contricioun lastith man may euer hope of' forȝeuenes and of' þis comeþ hate of' synne þat destroyeth synne boþe in himself' and eek' in oþer folk' at' his power [307] ¶ And þerfore saith dauid. ȝe þat' louen god? hatith wikkidnesse. For trustiþ wel for to loue god. is for to loue þat' he loueþ. and hate þat he hatiþ

[308] ¶ The laste þing' þat' a man schuld vnderstonde in contricioun is þis. wher of' auailith contricioun ¶ I say þat' som tyme contricioun deliereþ man fro synne [309] of' which þat dauid saith ¶ I say quod dauid. þat' is to say. I purposid fermely to schryue me and þou lord relesedist' my synne [310] ¶ And right' so as contricioun auailith nat' wiþoute sad purpos of' schrift' if' man haue oportunite? Right' so. litil worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun wiþoute contricioun [311] ¶ And more ouer contricioun destruyeþ þe prisoun of' helle and makiþ wayk' and feble þe strengthes of' þe deueles and restorith þe ȝift' of' þe holy gost/ and of' alle vertues [312] and it clensith þe soule of' synnes and deliereþ þe soule fro þe peynes of' helle and fro þe companye of' þe deuel and fro þe seruage of' synne and restorith to alle goode espirituelles in to þe companye & communioun of' holy chirche [313] ¶ And forþer ouer it makith him þat' som tyme was sone of' Ire? [1]sone of' grace ¶ And alle þese þinges he prouith by holy writte. [314] And þerfore he þat wil sette his herte to þese þinges? he were ful

[[1] *leaf* 259, *back*]

wys ¶ For soþe he scholde not' þanne in al his lyf' haue corrage to synne. but ȝiuen his body and al his herte to þe seruice of' Ihū crist' and þerof' do him homage [315] ¶ For certis oure swete lord ihū crist' haþ sparid vs so debonerly in oure folyes. þat' if' he ne hadde pite of mannes soule: sory songe mighte we alle synge. ¶ **Explicit' prima pars Incipit secunda pars eiusdem**

[*No break in the MS.*]

[316]

THe secounde partye of' penitence is confessioun. þat' is signe of' contricioun [317] ¶ Now schul ȝe vnderstonde what' is confessioun and wheþir it oughte needes be doon or noon. A whiche ben conuenable to verray confessioun

[318] ¶ First' schalt þou vnderstonde þat' confessioun is verrey schewyng' of' synnes to þe prest' [319] þis is to sayn verray. For he moot' schewe him of' alle þe condicioun's þat' ben longynge to his synne as ferforth as he can [320] al mot be sayd and nouȝt' excused ne hyd ne forwrappid and nouȝt auaunte him of' his goode werkis [321] ¶ And forþermore it is necessary to vnderstonde whens þat' synnes springe and how þay exersen. and whiche þer ben

[322] of' þe springing' of' synnes as seint poul saiþ in þis wise ¶ That' right as by a man synne entred first in to þis world. and þorugh þat' synne deth: Right' so þilke deth entred in to alle men þat synneden. [323] and þis man was adam by whom þat' synne entred in to þis world whan he brak' þe comaundement of' god. [324] And þerfore he þat' first' was so mighty þat' he schulde not haue deyed bicam siþþe on þat' he moste needis deye wheþir he wolde or noon and al his progenie þat' is in þis world þat' in þilke manner synneden [325] ¶ loke þat' in þe / . testate of' Innocence whan adam and Eue

makid were in paradys and no þing' schame ne hadden of' her nakidnesse. [326] how þat' þe serpent' þat' was most' wyly of' alle oþer bestis þat god hadde makid sayde to þe womman ¶ why comaundid god to ȝow ȝe schulde nouȝt' ete of' euery tree in paradys [327] ¶ The womman answerde ¶ Of' þe fruyt quod sche of' þe trees in paradys we feede vs ¶ But soþly of' þe fruyt of' þe tre þat' is in þe myddil of' paradis. god forbad vs for to eten ne not' touche it lest' perauenture we schulde [1]deye [328] ¶ The serpent sayde to þe womman. Nay nay. ȝe schal not' drede of' deth for soþe god wot' þat' what day ȝe ete þerof' ȝoure eyen schal open and ȝe schul ben as goddis knowing' good and harm [329] ¶ The womman saugh þe tree was good to feedyng'. and fair to eyen and delitable to sight. She tok' of' þe fruyt' of' þe tree and eet it' and ȝaf' it to hir housbond And he eet' it' ¶ And anoon þe eyen of' hem boþe openeden [330] And whan þat' þay knewe þat' þay were naked: þay sowede of' fige leues in maner of' breches to hiden here membris [331] ¶ here may ȝe see þat' dedly synne haþ first' suggestioun of' þe feend as scheweþ here by þe neddir. and aftirward þe delit' of' þe fleisch as scheweth here by eua. and after þat þe consentyng' of' resoun as schewith by adam [332] ¶ For trustiþ wel þough so were þat' þe feend temptid oon. þat is to sayn þe fleissch hadde delit' in þe beaute of' þe fruyt' defendid. ȝit certes til þat' resoun þat' is to say adam consentid to þe etyng' of' þe fruyt/. ȝit' stood he in þastaat' of' Innocence [333] ¶ Of' þilk' adam took' we þilke synne original. for of' him flesschly descendit' be we alle. and engendrit of' vile and corrupt' m[a]tiere [334] ¶ And whan þe soule is put' in oure body right anoon is contract' original synne. [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . *no gap*] [335] and þerfore be we alle I-born sones of'

[1 *leaf* 260]

wraþþe and of' dampnac*ioun* p*er*durable if' it nere baptisme þat' we resceyuen which bynymeþ vs þe culpe ¶ But forsoþe þe peyne duelliþ wiþ vs as to temptacio*un* which peyne highte concupiscence [336] ¶ And þis concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man: hit makith him to coueyte couetise of' fleisschly synne by sight of' his eyȝen as to erþely þinges. and eek' coueityse of' heighnesse as by pride of' herte

[337] Now as to speke of' þe firste coueitise þat' is c*on*cupiscence after þe lawe of' oure me*m*bris þat' is [. . . . . [338] . . . . . *no gap*] nouȝt' obeissant to god þat is lord þ*er*fore is fleissch to him disobeisant þurgh concupiscence which þ*at*' ȝit is clepid norisshing' of' synne [. . . . . *no gap*] [339] ¶ Therfore al þe while þat' a ma*n* haþ in him þe peyne of' concupiscence it is impossible but he be tempted som tyme and moeued in his fleisch to synne /. [340] ¶ And þis may not' faile as longe as he lyueþ ¶ hit may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of' baptisme and by þe grace of' god þorugh penitence. [341] but' fully schal it neuer [1]quenche þat' he schal som tyme be moeued in himself but' if' he were al refreydit' by siknes or by malice of' sorserye or colde drinkes [342] ¶ For what saiþ seint' poul ¶ The fleissh coueitith agayn þe spirit. and þe spirit agayn þe fleisch þay ben so contrarie and so stryuen þat' a man may nouȝt' alwey do as he wolde [343] ¶ The same seint' poul after his penaunce in watir and in lond. in watir by night' and by day i*n* gret' p*er*il and in gret' peyne in lond and in famyne. and i*n* þurst' and colde. and cloþles oones almost' stoned al to þe deth [344] ¶ ȝit' saide he allas I caytif' man. who schal delyu*ere* me fro þe prison of' my caytif' body [345] And seint Ierom. whan he long' tyme had woned in desert' here wher as he hadde no c*om*paignye but' of' wilde bestes wher as he hadde

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no mete but herbes & water to his drink. ne non bed but þe nakid erþe. For which his fleisch was as blak as an Ethiopen for hete and neigh destroyed for cold [346] ¶ ȝit sayde he þat þe brennyng of lecchery boylid in al his body [347] ¶ wherfore I wot wel sicurly þat þay be desceyued þat say þay ben not temptid in here body. [348] ¶ witnesse on seint Iame thapostil þat saith. þat eu*er*y wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence þat is to sayn þat eu*er*ych of vs hath matere and occasio*un* to be tempted of þe norischy*ng* of synne þat is in his body [349] ¶ And þ*er*fore seint Ioh*an* þe Eu*aun*gelist saith ¶ If þat we sayn we be wiþoute synne: we deceyue oure silf and trouþe is nought in vs

[350] ¶ Now schal ȝe vnd*er*stonde in what maner þat synne waxiþ and encresceth in a man ¶ The firste þing is þilke norisching of synne of which I spak byforn þilke concupiscence. [351] And after þat cometh þe Subiecci*ou*n of þe deuel. þis is to sayn þe deueles bely with which he bloweþ in man þe fuyr of fleisschly co*n*cupiscence [352] And after þat a man bythink him whe þir he wol don it/ or non. þilke þing to which he is tempted. [353] ¶ and þanne if þ*at* a man wiþstonde and wayue þe firste entisynges of his fleisshe and of þe feend it is no synne. and if so be he do not so: þanne fleeth he anoon a flame of delit/ [354] and þ*an*ne it is good to be war and kepe him wel or ellis he wil falle anoon in to consentyng of synne / and þanne wol he do it if he may haue tyme and space and place [355] ¶ And of þis matere saith Moyses by þe deuel in þis manere ¶ þe feend [1]saith. // I wol chace and pursewe þe man by wickid suggestio*un*s and I wil hent him by moeuyng or steryng of synne and I wil parte my prise or my pray by deliberacio*un* and my lust schal be accomplisit in delit. I wil drawe my sword in consentynge [356] ¶ For certes right as a swerd departiþ a þing in tuo parties right

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so consentynge departeþ god fro man and þanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. þus saith þe feend. [357] For certis þanne is a man al deed in soule and þus is synne accomsid by temptacioun by delit and by consentyng and þanne is þe synne cleped actuel

[358] ¶ For soþe synne is in two maneres. ouþer it is venial or dedly synne. Sothly whan man louith any creature more þan iħū crist/ oure creatour: þanne it is dedly synne. And venial synne is. if a man loue iħū crist lasse þan him oughte [359] ¶ For soþe þe dede of þis venial synne is ful perilous. For it amenisith þe loue þat men schulde haue to god more and more [360] ¶ And þerfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes. Certes but if so be þat he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte: þay may ful lightly amenise in him al þe loue þat he hath to ihū crist [361] and in þis wise skippith venial in to dedly synne. ¶ For certes þe more þat a man chargith his soule wiþ venial synnes: þe more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne [362] ¶ And þerfore let vs nouȝt be negligent to descharge vs of venial synnes ¶ For the prouerbe saith. þat many smale makith a gret [363] ¶ And herken þis ensample ¶ A greet wawe of þe see comeþ som tyme wiþ so gret a violence þat it drenchith þe schip. and þe same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of water þat entrith þurgħ a litil creues in to þe thurrok and in to þe bothum of a schip if men be so neggligent þat þay descharge it nought by tyme [364] ¶ And þerfore al þough þer be differrence bitueen þese tuo causes of drenching. algates the schip is dreynt [365] ¶ Right so farith it som tyme of deedly synne and of anoyous venial synnes whan þay multiplien in a man so gretly þat þilke worldly þynges þat he loueth þurgħ which he sinneth venially is as gret in his herte as þe loue of god or more [366]

¶ And þerfore þe loue of eu*er*y þing þere is not byset in god ne doon p*rin*cipally for goddes sake / al þough a man loue it lasse þan god. ȝit is it venial sy*n*ne [367] [1]And deedly synne whan þe loue of eny þing weyeth in þe hert of a man as moche as þe loue of god or more [368] ¶ Dedly synne is as saith seint austyn). whan man torneth his hert from god which þat is verray souerayn bounte þat may not chaunge and flitte. and ȝiue his herte to a þing þat may chaunge and flitte. [369] and certes þat is eu*er*y þing saue god of heuen ¶ For soþe if þat a man ȝiue his loue þe which that he owiþ to god wiþ al his herte vnto a creature. certes as moche of loue as he ȝiueth to þilke creature: so moche he reueth fro god. [370] and þ*er*fore doth he synne. ¶ For he þat is dett*our* to god and ȝeldeth not his dette þat is to sayn al þe loue of his hert

[371] ¶ Now siþþe ma*n* vnderstondith generally which is venial synne: þanne is it couenable to telle specially of synnes whiche þat many man p*er*auenture ne demith hem no synnes and schryueth him not of þe same þinges and ȝit naþeles þay ben synnes [372] ¶ And soþly as clerkes writen þis is to say. at euery tyme þat man etith or drinkith more þan suffiseþ to þe sustiena*u*nce of his body in certeyn he doþ synne: [373] and eek whan he spekith more þan it needith he doþ synne. and eek whan he herkeneth nouȝt benignely þe pleynt of þe pore [374] eek whan he is in hele of body and wil not faste whan oþer folk fasten wiþoute*n* cause resonable. / eek whan he slepith more þan needith or whan he comeþ by þilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche or to oþer werkes of charite [375] Eke whan he vseþ his wyf wiþoute souerayn desir of engendrure to thonour of god and for þentent to ȝelde to his wyf þe dette of his body. [376] eek whan he wil not visite þe sike and þe p*ri*soner if he may

[1 *leaf* 261, *back*]

¶ eek' if' he loue wyf' or child or oþer worldly þing' more þan resoun requireth. eek' if' he flatere or blaundisshe more þan him oughte for eny necessite [377] ek' if' a man menuse or wiþdrawe þe almesse of' þe pouere eek' if' he apparaylith his body more deliciously þan it nedith or ete it' to hastily by licouresnes. [378] eek' if' he talke of' vanitees at' chirche or at' goddis seruice. or þat' he be a talkere of' ydil wordes of' vanite or of' vilonye / for he schal ȝelde of' hem acount' at' þe day of' doome. [379] eek' whan he heetith or assureth to do þinges þat' he may nouȝt performe. eek' whan þat' by lightnes or foly he myssaith or scorneþ his [1]neighebor. [380] eek' whan he haþ any wicked suspeccioun of' þing' þat' he wot' of' it' no sothfastnesse. [381] þese þinges and mo wiþoute nombre ben synnes as saith seint' austyn

[382] ¶ Now schal men vnderstonde þat' al be it' so þat' noon erþely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes: ȝit' may he refreyne hem by þe brennyng' loue þat' he haþ to oure lord iħū crist and by prayeres and by confessioun and oþer goode werkes. so þat it' schal but' litil greue [383] ¶ For as saith seint' austyn ¶ ȝif' a man loue god in such a maner þat' al þat' euer he doth is in þe loue of' god or for þe loue of' god verraily for he brenneþ in þe loue of' god [384] ¶ loke how moche þat' a drope of' watir þat' fallith in a furneys ful of' fuyr annoyeth of' greueth: So moche annoyeþ a venial synne vnto a man þat is perfyt' in þe loue of' iħū crist' [385] ¶ Men may also refreyne venial synne vnto a man by resceyuyng' of' þe precious body of' ihū crist/ [386] by receyuyng' eek' of' holy water. by almes dede. by general confessioun of' Confiteor at' masse and at' complyn and blessing' of' bisschops and of' prestes and by other goode werkis

[*No break in the MS.*]

[1 *leaf* 262]

[387] ¶ Now it is bihouely þing' to telle whiche ben dedly synnes þat' is to sayn chiueteyns of' synnes. alle þay renne in oon loos. but' in diuers maners now ben þay cleped chiueteyns. For als moche as þay ben chief' and springers of' alle oþere synnes [388] ¶ Of' þe roote of' þese seuen synnes; þanne is pride þe general synne and roote of' alle harmes ¶ For of' þis roote springen general braunches. As Ire. Enuye. accidie or sleuthe. auarice or coueitise. to commune vnderstondynge. glotonye and leccherie [389] ¶ And euerich of' þese synnes hath his braunches and his twigges as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[390] and þough so be þat' no man can telle vtterly þe nombre of' þe twigges and of' þe harm þat' comeþ of' pride: ȝit' wol I schewe a party of' hem as ȝe schul vnderstonde [391] ¶ Ther is Inobedience. auauntyng'. ypocrisye. despit'. arragaunce. Imprudence. Swellyng' of' hert'. Insolence. Elaciou*n*. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] pertinacie. veinglorie. and many anoþer twigge þat' I can not' telle ne declare [392] Inobedient' is he þat' disobeieth for despyt' to þe comaundements of' god and to his souereigns. and to his gostly fader. [393] Auauntour is he þat' bosteth of' þe harm or of' þe bounte þat' he haþ don [394] ¶ ypocrisy is þat [1]hydeth to schewe him such as he is and scheweþ him such as he not' is [395] ¶ Despitous is he þat' haþ desdayn of' his neighebour þat' is to say of' his euen cristen or haþ despit' to doon þat him ought' to doon [396] ¶ Arragaunt' is he þat' þinkeþ þat' he hath þilke bountees in him þat' he haþ not' or

weneth þat he schulde haue he*m* by desert/. or elles he demeth þat' he is þat' he is not'. [397] ¶ Impudent' is he þat' for his pride hath no schame of' his sy*n*ne. [398] ¶ Swellyng' of' hert' is whan a man reioysith him of' harm þat' he haþ don [399] ¶ Insolent' is he þat' dispisith in his iuggement' alle oþer folk' as to regard of' his valieu and of' his connyng' & of' his spekyng' and of' his beryng' [400] ¶ Elacio*u*n is whan he may neuer suffre to haue maister ne felawe [401] ¶ Impacient is he þat' wil not' ben I-taught' ne vndernome of' his vices and by stryf' werreþ trouþe witynge and defendeþ his folie [402] ¶ Contimax is he þat' þorugh his indignacio*u*n and agains eu*e*rych auctorite or power of' hem þat' been his souerayns [403] ¶ Presu*m*pcio*u*n is whan a ma*n* vndertakith and emprisith þat' him oughte not to do. or elles þat' he may not' doo. and þat' is cleped surquidrye ¶ Irreuerence is. whan men doon not' honour þer as he*m* ought' to doon. and wayteth to be reuerenced [404] ¶ Pertinacie is. whan man defendith his folye and trusteþ to moche to his owne witte [405] ¶ Vayn glorie is. for to haue pomp and delit in temporal heighnes and glorifie him in worldly estaat' [406] ¶ Iangelyng' is whan a man spekith to moche biforn folk' & clappith as a mille and takeþ no keep what' he saiþ

[407] and ȝit' is þer a priue spice of' pride þat' wayteth first/ to be saluet' er he saliewe al be he lasse worth þan þat' oþer is p*ar* aduenture. and eek' wayteþ or desireþ to sitte aboue him or to go aboue him in þe way. or kisse pax. or ben encensed or gon to þe offringe biforn his neighebore [408] and haþ such [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] a proud desir to be magnified and honoured toforn þe poeple

[409] ¶ now ben tuo man*er*s of' pride. þat' oon is heighnes wiþinne þe hert/ of' a man and þat'

oþer is wiþoute. [410] of which soþly þese forsayde þinges and mo þan I haue said aperteynen to pride þat is in þe hert of a man. and þat oþer spices of pride ben wiþoute [411] ¶ But natheles þat oon of þise spices of pride is signe of þat oþer. Right as gay leuesselle at þe tauerne is signe of wyn þat is in þe celer. [412] and þis is in many þinges [1]as in speche and countienaunce and in outrageous array of cloþing [413] ¶ For certis if þer hadde be no synne in cloþing: *crist* wolde not so soone haue notid and spoke of þe cloþing of þilke riche ma*n* in þe gospel. [414] And saith seint Gregorie þat precious cloþing is coupable for derthe of it and for his schortnes. and for his straungenes and disgisines. and for þe sup*er*fluite. or for þe inordinat skantnes of it/ [415] Allas many man may sen as in oure dayes þe synful costlewe array of cloþing [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

[416] . . . . . .
. . . *no gap*] which þat makid is so dere to harm of þe poeple. [417] not oonly þe cost of embrowdyng þe guyse endentyng of barryng. / Swandyng. palyng. or bendyng. and semblable wast of cloþ in vanite [418] ¶ But þer is also costlewe furring in here gownes so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make holes so moche daggyng of scheris. [419] for with þe sup*er*fluite in lengþe of the forsaide gownes traylinge in þe donge and in þe myre on hors and eek on foote as wel of ma*n* as of wo*m*man þat al þilke traylyng is verray as in effect/ wasted consumed þredbare and rotyn with donge raþer þan it is ȝeuen to þe pore to gret damage of þe forsaide pore folk. [420] and þat in sondry wise. þis is to sain þat þe more þat cloþ is wastid þe more most it/ coste to þe poeple for þe scarsenes [421] and forþermore if it so be þat þay wolde ȝiue suche pounsed and

daggid cloþing' to þe pore folk'. it' is not' conuenient to were to the pore folk' ne suffisaunt' to beete here necessite to kepe hem fro þe desperance of' þe firmament' [422] ¶ vpon þat' oþer syde to speke of' þe horrible disordinat scantnes of' cloþing'. as ben þese cuttid sloppis or Anslets þat' þurgh her schortnes ne couereth not' þe schamful membre of' man to wickid entent [423] Alas som men of' hem schewen þe schap and þe boce of' the horrible swollen membres þat' semeth like to þe maledies of' hirnia in þe wrapping' of' here hose / [424] and eek' þe buttokes of' hem þat' faren as it were þe hinder part of' a sche ape in þe fulle of' þe moone [425] ¶ And more ouer þe wrecchid swollen membres þat' þay schewe þurgh desgysyng' in departyng' of' here hoses in whyt' and reed seemith þat half' þe schameful priue membres were flayn. [426] And if' it so be þat' þay departe here hosen in oþer colours. as it whit and bliew. or whit and blak' and reed and so forth: [427] þanne semith it [1]as by variaunce of' colour þat' half' þe party of' his priuy membris ben corrupt' by þe fuyr of' seint' antony or by cancre or by other such meschaunce [428] ¶ And ȝit of' þe hynder partye of' here buttokes it' is ful horrible for to see. For certis in þat partie of' here body þer as þay purgen her stynkyng' ordure [429] þat' foule party schewe þay to þe poeple proudly in despyt' of' honeste which honeste þat' ihū crist' and his frendes obserueden to schewen in his lif' [430] ¶ Now as of' þe outrageous array of' wommen. God wot'. þat' þough þe visage of' some of' hem seme ful chaste and debonaire: ȝit' notifye þay in here array of' attyre licorousnesse and pride [431] I say not' þat' honeste in cloþing' of' man or womman is vncouenable ¶ But' certis þe superfluite or disordinat' skantnes of' cloþing' is repreuable [432] ¶ Also þe synne of' here ornament' or of' apparaile as in þinges þat' aperteynen to rydyng' as in to many delicat' horses þat' ben hold-

[1 *leaf* 263, *back*]

en for delyt' þat' þay ben so faire fat' and costlewe [433] and also many a vicious knaue mayntened by cause of' hem and in to curious harnoys as in sadelis and bridlis cropours and peytrelle couered with precious cloþing' and riche barres and plates of' gold and of' siluer [434] For whiche god saithe by ȝacharie þe prophete ¶ I wol confounde þe ryders of' such horsis [435] ¶ These folk' take litil reward of' þe ryding' of' goddes sone of' heuen and of' his harneys whan he rode vpon an asse. and hadde noon oþer harneys but' þe cloþing' of' his disciples newe. ¶ Ne rede I not' þat' euer he rode on oþer beest' [436] ¶ I speke þis for þe synne of' superfluite and nouȝt' for resonable honeste whan resoun it' requirith [437] ¶ And forþer ouer certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng' of' gret' meyne whan þay ben of' litil profyt' or of' right' no profyt'. [438] and namely whan þat' meyne is felenous and daungerous to þe poeple by hardynesse of' lordschipe or by way of' offices [439] Fo[r] certes suche lordes selle þanne here lordschipe to þe deuel of' helle whan þay susteyne þe wickidnes of' here meyne [440] or elles whan þese folk' of' lowe degre as is þilke þat' holden hostilries and susteyne þe þefte of' here hostilers and þat is in many maneres of' disceytes. [441] þilke maner of' folk' ben þe flyes þat' folwen þe hony or elles þe houndes [1]þat' folwen þe carayn. suche forsayde folk / strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes [442] for whiche þus saith dauid þe prophete ¶ wikked deth moot' come vpon such lordschipes. & god ȝeue þat' þay moot' descende in to helle a doun. For in here houses ben iniquites and schrewednesses and not' god of' heuen. [443] and certes but' þay do amendement'. right' so as god ȝaf' his benisoun to pharao by þe seruice of' Iacob and to balan þe seruice of' Ioseph. Right' so god wil ȝeue his malisoun to such lordschipes as susteynen þe wikkednes of' her seruauntes but' þay

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come to amendement [444] ¶ Pride of þe table apperith ful ofte. for certes riche men ben cleped to feste and pore folk ben put away and rebuked [445] ¶ Also in excesse of diuers metis and drinkis and namely of suche maner of bake metis brennyng of wilde fuyr and peynted and castelid wiþ papire and semblable wast. / so þat it is abusioun for to þinke [446] and eek in greet preciousnes of vessel & in curiousnesse of vessel and of mynstralcye by þe whiche a man is stired þe more to delitis of luxurie [447] if so be that þay sette her herte þe lasse vpon oure lord ihū crist ¶ Certeyn it is a synne. and certeinly þe delites mighte be so grete in þe caas þat men mighte lightly falle by hem in to dedly synne [448] ¶ þe espices þat sourdren of pride soþely whan þay sourdren of malice ymagined and auised. aforn cast or elles of vsage ben dedly synnes it is no doute. [449] and whan þay sourden by frelte vnauysed sodeinly and sodeinly wiþdrawe agayn al be þay greuous synnes I gesse þay ben not dedly [450] Now mighte men axe wher-of pride sourdeth and springeth ¶ I say som tyme it springith of þe goodes of nature / and som tyme of þe goodes of [. . . . . *no gap*] grace. [451] certes goodes of nature stonden ouþer in goodes of body or goodes of soule [452] ¶ Certis þe goodes of body ben hele of body. strengþe. deliuerance. beaute. gentrie. fraunchises. [453] ¶ Goodes of nature of þe soule. ben goodes with scharp vnderstondyng subtil engyn vertu naturel. good memorie [454] ¶ Goodes of fortune been richesses. highe degrees of lordschipes preisyng of þe poeple [455] ¶ Goodes of grace been science. power to suffre spirituel trauaile. benignite. vertuous contemplacioun. wiþstondyng of temptacioun and semblable þinges. [456] of whiche forsayde goodes certe it is a ful gret [1]foly a man to pryden him in any of hem alle [457]

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¶ Now as for to speke of' goodes of' nature: god wot' þat som tyme we haue he*m* in nature as moche as to oure damage as to oure profit [458] ¶ As for to speke of' hele of' body. certes it passith ful lightly. and eek' it is ful ofte enchesoun of' þe siknesse of' þe soule [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ And þ*er*fore þe more þ*at*' our*e* body is hool þe more be we i*n* peril to falle [459] ¶ Eke for to pride him i*n* his strengþe of' body it is a foly. for certes þe fleisch coueytith again þe spirit'. and ay þe more strong' þat' þe fleisch is þe sorier may þe soule be / [460] and ouer al þis strengþe of' body and worldly hardynes causeþ ful ofte many man to peril and meschaunce [461] Eek' for to pride him of' his gentrie is ful gret' folye: For often tyme þe gentrie of' þe body bynymeth þe gentery of' þe soule ¶ And we ben all*e* of' oon fader and of' oon moder & all*e* we ben of' oon nature roten and corrupt riche and pore [462] ¶ For soþe oon maner gentry is for to p*ra*yse þat' apparailleþ ma*n*nes corrage with vertues and moralitees and makith hi*m* cristes child [463] ¶ For trustiþ wel ouer what' ma*n* þat' synne haþ maistry: he is verray cherl to synne

[464] ¶ Now ben þer general synnes of' gentilesce as schewyng' of' vice & rybaudrie and seruage of' synne. in word in werk' and contenaunce [465] ¶ And vsinge vertu curtesie and clennes / and to be liberal þat' is to sayn large by mesure. for þilke þat' passith mesure is foly and synne [466] ¶ And anoþer is to remembre him of' bounte þat' he of' oþer folk' haþ resceyued [467] ¶ Another is to be benigne to his goode subiectis ¶ wherfore as saiþ senek'. ¶ Ther is no þing' more couenable to a man of' heigh estate þan debonairte and pite [468] ¶ And þ*er*fore þise flies þat' men clepen bees whan þay make here king': þay chesen oon þat' haþ no pricke wher wiþ he may stynge [469]

¶ Anoþer is. a man to haue a noble herte & a diligent to atteigne to hihe vertuous þinges [470] ¶ Certis also who þat prideth him in þe deedes of grace: is eek an outrageous fool ¶ For þilke ȝiftes of grace þat schulde haue I-torned him to goodnes and medicyne: torneth him to venym and to confusioun as saiþ seint gregory [471] ¶ Certis also. who-so pridith him in þe goodes of fortune. he is a ful gret fool ¶ For som tyme is a man a gret lord by þe morwe þat is a caytif and a wrecche er it be nightt./ [472] ¶ And som tyme þe riches of a man is cause of his deth. / [1]¶ Som tyme þe delice is cause of his greuous maledye þurgh which he deieth [473] ¶ Certis þe commendacioun of þe poeple is somtyme ful fals and ful brutil for to truste. þis day þay prayse: to morwe þay blame [474] ¶ God woot desir to haue commendacioun of þe poeple haþ causid deth of many a busy man [475] ¶ Now sith so is. þat ȝe han herd and vnderstonde what is pride. And whiche ben þe spices of it / and whens pride sourdeth and springeþ:

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[476] Now schul ȝe vnderstonde. which is þe remedy agayns pride ¶ And þat is humilite or meekenes [477] þat is a vertue þurgh which a man haþ verray knowleche of himself and holdith of himself no pride ne pris ne deynte as in regard of his desertes considering euermore his frelte. [478] ¶ Now ben þer þre maners of humilite. As humilite in hert/ anoþer is humilite in his mouth. þe þridde in his workes // [479] ¶ þe humilite in his herte. is in foure maners: þat oon is whan a man holdith him self not worth biforn god of heuen. anoþer is whan he despiseþ

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no man [480] ¶ The þrid is. whan he ne rekkiþ noughtᵗ þough a man holde him nouȝtᵗ worth ¶ The ferþe is whan he holdeþ him noughtᵗ sory ofᵗ his humiliacio*un* [481] ¶ Also þe humilite ofᵗ mouth is in foure þinges. In attempre speche. and in humbles ofᵗ speche. and he byknowith wiþ his owne mouth þatᵗ he is such as him þenkith þatᵗ he is in herte. Ano*þer* is whan he praisith þe bounte ofᵗ anoþer man and no þingᵗ *þer*ofᵗ amenusith [482] ¶ Humilite eekᵗ in werkᵗ is in foure maneres ¶ The firstᵗ is whan he puttith oþer men toforn him ¶ þe secounde is to chese þe lewedestᵗ place ouer al ¶ þe þrid is gladly to assente to good counseil [483] ¶ þe ferþe is gladly to stonde to thaward ofᵗ his souereyns or ofᵗ him þatᵗ is in heigher degre. certeyn þis is a gretᵗ werkᵗ ofᵗ humilite

[*No break in the MS.*]

[484] ¶ **De Inuidia.** [*in margin*]

AFter pride now wol I speke ofᵗ þe foule synne ofᵗ Envye which þatᵗ is as by þe word ofᵗ þe philosophre. sorwe ofᵗ other mennes p*ros*p*er*ite ¶ And after þe word ofᵗ seintᵗ austyn. is it sorwe ofᵗ oþer mennes wele & ioye ofᵗ oþer mennes harm [485] ¶ This foule synne is platly agayns þe holy gostᵗ. al be it so þatᵗ eu*er*y synne is agayn the holy gostᵗ: ȝitᵗ natheles for as moche as bounte ap*er*teyneth proprely to þe holy gostᵗ. and enuye p*ro*prely is malice: þerfore is itᵗ p*ro*prely agayns þe bounte ofᵗ þe holy gost [486] ¶ Now haþ malice [1]tuo spices. *þat*ᵗ is to sayn hardnes ofᵗ hertᵗ in wickednes or ellis þe fleisch ofᵗ man is blynd þatᵗ he considereth notᵗ *þat*ᵗ he is in synne [. . . . . *no gap*] which is þe hardnes ofᵗ the deuyl [487] ¶ Thatᵗ oþer spice ofᵗ enuye is. whan a man warieth trouþe and wotᵗ þatᵗ it is trouþe. and eekᵗ whan he warieth þe grace þatᵗ god haþ ȝeue to his

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neighebor and al þis is by enuye [488] ¶ Certes þan is enuye þe worste synne þat is ¶ For sothely alle oþer synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special vertu [489] ¶ But certes enuye is agayns alle vertues and agayns al goodnes. for it is sory of alle þe bountees of his neighebor ¶ And in þis maner it is diuers from alle þe synnes. [490] ¶ For wel vnneþe is þer any synne þat he ne hath som delit in himself sauf oonly enuye þat euer hath in it self anguisch and sorwe [491] ¶ The spices of enuye ben þese ¶ Ther is first sorwe of oþer mennes goodnes and of her prosperite. and prosperite is kyndely matier of ioye. þanne is enuye a synne agayns kynde [492] ¶ The secounde spice of enuye. is ioye of oþer mennes harm. and þat is proprely lik to the deuyl þat euer reioyeth him of mennes harm [493] ¶ Of þese tuo spices comeþ bacbityng. and þis synne of bakbytyng or detraccioun hath certein spices as þus ¶ Som man praiseth his neighebor by a wickid entent. [494] For he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last ende. alway he makith a but. at þe last ende þat is þing of more blame þan worth is al þe praysing [495] ¶ The secounde spice is þat if a man be good and doth or saiþ a þing to good entent: þe bacbiter wol torne al þilke goodnes vpso-doun to his schrewed entent. [496] þe þridde is to amenuse þe bounte of his neighebor. [497] þe ferþe spiece of bakbytyng is þis. þat if men speke goodnes of a man: þan wil þe bakbiter seyn. par fay ȝit such a man is bet þan he in dispraysynge of him þat men praise. [498] þe fifte spice is þis for to consente gladly and herken gladly to þe harm þat men speke of oþer folk. þis synne is ful gret and ay encresith after thentent of þe bakbiter [499] ¶ After bakbytyng comeþ grucching or murmuracioun. And som tyme it springith of Insapiens agayns god. and somtyme agains man.

[500] agayns god is it. whan a man grucchith agayn pyne of' helle or agayns pouerte. or of' losse of' catel. or agayn reyn or tempest' [1]or elles grucchiþ þat' schrewes han prosperite or ellis þat' goode men han aduersite. [501] and alle þese þinges schulde men suffre paciently. for þay come by rightful iuggement' and ordinaunce of' god [502] ¶ Som tyme cometh grucching' of' auarice as Iudas grucched aȝens þe Maudeleyn whan sche anoynted þe hed of' oure lord ihū crist' with hir precious oynement. [503] þis maner murmur is swich as man grucchith of' goodnes þat' himself' doþ or þat' oþer folk' doon of' here owne catel [504] ¶ Som tyme comeþ murmur of' pride. as whan Symon þe pharise grucchid agayn þe maudeleyn whan sche approchid to ihū crist' and wepte at' his feet' for hir synnes. [505] And somtyme it sourdith of' enuye whan men discoueren a mannes harm þat' was priue or bereþ him on hond þing' þat' is fals [506] ¶ Murmuryng' eek' is ofte among' seruauntȝ þat' grucchen whan here souerayns bidden hem to doon leeful þinges. [507] and for as moche as þay dar nouȝt' openly wiþstonde the comaundementȝ of' here souerayns: ȝit' wol thay sayn harm and grucche and murmure priuely for verray despit / [508] whiche wordes men clepe þe deueles pater noster. þough so be þat' þe deuel hadde neuer pater noster but' þat' lewed men calle it' so [509] ¶ Som tyme it comeþ of' Ire of' priue hate þat' norischeth rancour in herte as I schal declare. [510] þanne comeþ eek' bitternes of' herte. þorugh which bitternesse euery good deede of' his neighebore semeþ to him bitter and vnsauery [511] ¶ But' þanne comeþ discord þat' vnbyndeth alle maner of' frendschipe. þanne comeþ scornynge. of' [. . . . . *no gap*] his neighebor al do he neuer so wel. [512] þanne comeþ accusyng'. as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his

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neighebore which þat' is lik' þe craft' of' þe deuel þat' waytith boþe night' and day to accuse vs alle [513] ¶ þanne comeþ malignite þurgh which a man annoyeth his neighebor priuely if' he may. [514] And if' he not' may algate his wikkid while schal nought' wante as for to brenne his hous priuely or empoysone or sleen his bestis priuely and semblable þinges

[*No break in the MS.*]

[515] ¶ Remedium contra Inuidiam. [*from the margin*]

NOw wol I speke of' þe remedies agayns þise foule þinges and þis foule synne of' enuye ¶ First' is þe loue of' god principal and louynge of' his neighebor as himself'. ¶ Soþely þat' oon ne may nought' ben wiþoute þat oþer [516] ¶ And truste wel þat' in þe name of' þy neighebour þou [1]schalt' vnderstonde þe name of' þy broþer. For alle we haue oon fader fleisschly and oon mooder þat' is to sain adam and eua and eek' oon fader spirituel & þat' is god of' heuen. [517] Þy neghhebor artow holden for to loue. [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . *no gap*] þat' is to sayn boþe to sauacioun of' lif' and of' soule [518] and more ouer. þou schalt' loue hym in word and in benigne amonestyng' and chastising' & conforte him in his annoyes and praye for him with al þin herte [519] ¶ & in dede þou schalt' loue him in such wise þat' þou schalt' do to him charite as þou woldist' it were doon to þin oughne persone [520] and þerfore þou schalt' doon him noon harme in wikked word ne damage him in his body ne in his catel ne in his soule by wicked entising' of' ensample [521] ¶ þou schalt' nouȝt' desiren his wif/ ne noone of' his þinges ¶ vnderstonde eek' þat' in the name of' þy neighebor is comprehendid his enemy [522] ¶ Certes man schal loue his enemy by þe comaundement' of' god. and soþly þy frend schalt' þou loue in god [523] ¶ I sayde þin enemy schaltow loue for goddes sake by his comaunde-

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ment' for if' it were resoun that' man schulde hate his enemy For-soþe god nolde nouȝt' receyue vs to his loue þat' ben his enemys [524] ¶ Agains þre maner of' wronges þat' his enemy doþ to him he schal do þre þinges as þus. [525] agayns hate and rancour of' herte he schal loue him in herte. Agayns chydyng' and wicked wordes he schal pray for his enemye. agains wikked dede of' his enemy he schal doon him bounte [526] ¶ For crist' saith loueþ ȝoure enemyes and prayeþ for hem þat' ȝow chacen and pursewen. and doþ bounte to hem þat' ȝow haten. [. . . . . *no gap.*] [527] For sothely nature driueþ vs to loue oure frendes / and p*ar* fay oure enemyes han more neede to loue þan oure frendes ¶ For sothely to hem þat' more neede haue certis to hem schul men do goodnes. [528] And certis in þilke dede haue we by remembr*a*unce of' þe loue of' ihū c*ri*st' þat' dyed for his enemys [529] ¶ And in als moche as þilke loue is more greuous to parforme: so moche is þe more gret' remedye & meryt' ¶ And þ*er*fore þe louyng' of' oure enemy haþ confoundid the venym of' þe deuel. [530] For right' as þe deuel is confoundid by humilite: Right' so is he woundid to þe deth by loue of' oure enemy [531] ¶ Certes þanne is loue þe medicine þat' castith out' þe venym of' enuye fro mannes hert'. [532] the spices of' þis p*ar*t' [1] schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwynge

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ **De Ira.** [*from the margin*]

[533] AFter enuye wol I descryuen þe synne of' Ire. For soþely who so haþ enuye vpon his neighebor: anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of' wraþþe in word or in dede agayns hi*m* to whom he haþ envie. [534] and as wel comeþ Ire of' pride

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as of' enuye ¶ For soþly he þat' is proud or enuyous is lightly wroth.

[535] þis synne of' Ire after þe descryuyng' of' seint' austyn is wikked wille to ben auengid by word or by dede [536] ¶ Ire afte þe philosofer is þe feruent' blood of' man I-quiked in his hert' þurgh which he wolde harm to him þat' him hatiþ [537] ¶ For certes þe hert' of' man by eschawfyng' and mornyng' of' his blood waxith so trouble / þat' he is out' of' alle Iuggements of' reso*u*n [538] ¶ But' ȝe schal vnder-stonde þat' ire is in tuo maneres. þat' oon of' he*m* is good. þat' oþer is wikke [539] ¶ The good Ire is by ialousy of' goodnesse þurgh which a ma*n* is wroþ wiþ wikkidnes. and [. . . . . *no gap*] þerfore saith a wise man þat' ire is bet' þan play. [540] This Ire is with deboneirete. and it is wroþ wiþoute bitternes. not' wroth w*ith* þe man: but' wroþ wiþ þe mys dedes of' þe ma*n* as saiþ þe p*r*ophet' dauid ¶ Irascim*in*i & nolite p*e*ccare. &c' [541] ¶ Now vnderstonde þat' wikked Ire is in tuo maners þat' is to sayn sodeyn Ire or hastif' Ire wiþoute auysemen*t*' and consenting' of' reso*u*n. [542] the menynge and þe sentence of' þis is þ*at*' þe resou*n* of' a man ne co*n*sentith not' to þilke sodein Ire. And þanne is it venial [543] ¶ anoþ*er* Ire is ful wicked þat' comeþ of' felony of' herte auysed & cast biforn with wickid wille to do vengea*u*nce and þerto his resoun consentith. and sothely þis is deedly synne. [544] þis ire is so displesaunt' to god þat' it' troublith his hous and chaceth þe holy gost' out' of' ma*n*nes soule and wastith and destroyeth þe liknes of' god. þat' is to say þe v*er*tu þat' is i*n* ma*n*nes soule [545] and put' in him þe likenes of' þe deuel and bynymeth þe ma*n* fro god þat' is his rightful lord [546] ¶ This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to þe deuel. for it' is þe deueles fornays þat' is eschaufid wiþ þe fuyr of' helle [547] ¶ For certes

right' so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erþely þinges þan eny oþer element'? Right' so Ire is mighty to destroye alle spirituel *þinges* [548] ¶ loke how þat' fuyr of' smale gledis þat' ben almost' dede vnder asshen wolden quiken agayn whan þay ben touched [. . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [1]by pride þat' is couered in mannes herte [549] ¶ For certes fuyr may nouȝt come out' of' no þing' [. . . . . *no gap*] naturelly as fuyr is drawe out' of' flintes with steel [550] ¶ Right' so as pride is often tyme mater of' Ire? Right' so is Rancour norice and keper of' Ire [551] ¶ Ther is a maner tree as saiþ seint Isydre . *þat'* whan men maken fuyr of' þilke tree and couer þe colis wiþ asshen? soþly þe fuyr of' it' wol lasten al a ȝer or more. [552] And right' so fareþ it' of' rancour whan it' oones is conceyued in þe hertis of' som men? certein it wol lasten fro oon estren day vntil anoþer ester day and more. [553] but' certis þilke ma*n* is ful fer fro þe m*er*cy of' god al þilke while

[554] ¶ In þis forsaide deueles fornays þer forgen þre schrewes. pride þat/ ay blowith & encresith þe fuyr by chidyng' and wickid wordis [555] ¶ þa*n*ne stont' enuye and blowith þe hoote Iren vpon þe hert/ of' ma*n* wiþ a paire of' longe tonges of' rancour [556] and þanne þe sinne of' contumelie or strif' and cheste and baterith and forgeth by vileyns repreuynges [557] ¶ Certes þis cursed synne a*n*noyeth boþe to þe man himsilf' and eek' to his neighebor ¶ For soþely almost' al þe harm þat' eny ma*n* doth to his neighebour comeþ þurgh wraþþe [558] ¶ For certis outrageous wraþþe doþ al *þat'* euer þe deuyl him comau*n*deth. For he ne spareþ neyþer crist' ne his moodir. [559] and in his outrage anger and Ire. allas ful many oon at' þat' tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly

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boþe of' crist' and eek' of' alle his halwes. [560] Is nat' þis a cursed vice? yis certis. it' bynymeth fro man his witte and his resoun and al his deboneire lyf' spirituel þat' scholde kepen his soule [561] ¶ Certes it bynymeþ eek' goddis dewe lordschipe and þat' is mannes soule. and þe loue of' his neighebor. hit' stryueþ eek' alday agayns trouþe ¶ It' reueth him eek' þe quiete of' his hert' and subuertith his herte and his soule

[562] ¶ Of' ire comeþ þese stynkynge engendrures ¶ First' hate þat' is old wraþþe discord þurgh which a man forsakiþ his olde frend þat' he haþ loued ful longe. [563] and þanne comeþ werre and euery maner of' wronge þat' man doth to his neighebor in body or catel [564] ¶ Of' þis cursed synne of' Ire comeþ eek' manslaughter. And vnderstonde wel þat' homicidie þat' is man-slaughter is in diuers wise. ¶ Som maner of' homicidie is spirituel and som is bodily. [565] [1] Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe þinges ¶ First' by hate as saith seint' Iohan ¶ he þat' hateþ his broþer is an homicide. [566] homicide is eek' by bak'-bytyng' of' whiche bakbiters saith Salamon þat' þay haue twaye swerdes with whiche þay slen here neighebors. For soþely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as his lif'. [567] homicidy is eek' in ȝeuyng' of' wikkid counseil by fraude as for to ȝeue counseil to areyse wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages [568] of' whiche saiþ Salomon ¶ leoun roryng' and bere hungry ben like to þe cruel lordschipes in wiþholdyng' or abbrigging' of' þe schipe or the hyre or þe wages of' seruauntes or ellis in vsure or in withdrawyng' of' almes of' pore folk' [569] For whiche þe pore man saith ¶ Feedith him þat' almost' dyeth for hunger. for soþely but if' þou feede him? þou slest' him and eek' þese ben dedly synnes. [570] bodily manslaughter is. whan þou sleest' him wiþ þy tonge in oþer manere as whan þou comaundist' to slen a man or elles ȝiuest' counseil to slee a

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man [571] ¶ Manslauȝter in dede is in foure maneres ¶ That' oon is by lawe. Right' as a Iustice dampnith him þat' is coupable to þe deth. But' let' þe Iustice be war þat' he do it rightfully and þat' he do it nought' for delit' to spille blood: but' for keping' of' right'wisnes [572] ¶ Anoþer homicidy is doon for necessite. as whan a man sleþ anoþer him defendaunt'. and þat' he may noon oþer wise eschape fro his deth. [573] but' certeynly if' he may escape wiþoute slaughter of' his aduersarie and sleth him he doth synne and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly synne. [574] ¶ Ek' if' a man by caas or aduenture schete an arwe or cast' a stoon wiþ which he sleþ a man: he is an homicide. [575] Eke if' a womman by negligence ouerlye hir child in hir sleping it' is homicide and deedly synne [576] ¶ Eke whan man distourbith concepcioun of' a child and makith a womman ouþer bareyn by drinke of' venenous herbis þurgh whiche sche may nouȝt' conceyue or sleth a child by drynkes. or elles putteþ certeyn material þinges in secre place to slee þe child. [577] or elles doþ vnkyndely synne by which man or womman schedith here nature in ma[n] or in place þer as þe child may nought' be conceyued. or ellis if' a womma[n] haue conceyued and hurt' hirself' and sleth þe child ȝit' is it' homycidie [578] [1]¶ What' say we eek' of' wommen þat' mordren here children for drede of' worldly schame. Certes an horrible homicidy. [579] homicidy is eek' if' a man approche to a womman by desir of' lecchery þurgh þe which þe child is perischt' or elles smitith a womman wytyngly þurgh which sche sleeth hir child. alle þese ben homicides [. . . . . *no gap*] [580] ¶ ȝit' cometh þer of' Ire many mo synnes as wel in word as in werk' & þought'. As he þat arettith vpon god and blamith god of' þing' of' which he is himself' gulty or despisith god and alle his halwes as doon þese cursed hasardours

in diu*ers* cuntrees. [581] þis cursed synne don þay whan þay felen in here herte ful wickidly of' god and his halwes [582] ¶ also whan þay treten vnreu*er*ently þe sacrament' of' þe auter. þilke synne is so gret' þat' vnneþe may it' be relessed but' þat' þe mercy of' god passith alle his werkes. and is so gret and so benigne [583] ¶ Thanne comeþ of' Ire attry anger whan a man is scharply amonested in his schrifte to forlete synne: [584] þanne wol he be angry and answere hokerly and angrily and defenden or excusen his synne by vnstedefastnesse of' his fleisch̄. or elles he dede it to holde companye with his felawes. or ellis he saith þe fend entised him. [585] or elles he dide it' for his ȝouthe. or ellis his co*m*plexio*un* is so corrageous þat' he may not' forbere. or ellis it is desteny. as he saith. [. . . . . *no gap*] it' comeþ him of' gentilesce of' his auncetrie and semblable þinges [586] ¶ Alle þese maner of' folk' so wrappen hem in here synnes þat' þay wol nouȝt' deliuer hemself' ¶ For soþely no wight' þat' excuseth him wilfully of' his synne may nought̄ / be deliuered of' his synne til þat' he mekely biknoweþ his synne. [587] ¶ After þis þanne [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' is expres agayns þe comau*n*deme*n*tȝ of' god & þis bifallith often of' angir and of' Ire [588] ¶ God saith. þou schalt' not' take þe name of' þy lord god in vayn or in ydil. ¶ Also oure lord ihū c*rist*' saith by þe word of' seint'. M*athew* [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [589] ¶ Ne wol ȝe not' swere i*n* alle manere. neither by heuen for it is goddes trone. ne by þe eorþe for it' is þe benche of' his feet'. ne by ier*usalem*: for it is þe cite of' a gret' king'. ne by þin heed: þou may nought' make an her whit' ne blak'. [590] but' sayeth by ȝoure word ȝe. ȝe. and nay. nay. and what' it' is more: it / is of' euel. þus saith ihū c*rist*' [591] ¶ For cristes sake swereþ not' so synfully in dismembring' of' crist'. for cristes sake. bi

soule. [1]herte. boones and body. For certes it semeþ þat ȝe þenke *þat* cursed Iewes ne dismembrit nought ynough· þe precious p*er*sone of crist. but ȝe dismembre him more. [592] and if so be þat þe lawe compelle ȝow to swere. þanne reule ȝow after þe lawe of god in ȝoure swering as saiþ. Ier*emie capitulo* .iiijto [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ Thou schalt kepe þre co*n*diciou*n*s. þou schalt swere in trouþe in doom and in rightwisnes [593] þis is to sayn. þou schalt swere soth. For euery lesyng is agayns crist. for crist is verray trouþe and þink wel þis þat euery gret swerer not compellid lawfully to swere þe wonder schal not dep*ar*te fro his hous whil he vseth such vnleful sweringe [594] ¶ þou schalt eek swere in doom whan þou art constreigned by þy domesman to witnesse þe trouþe. [595] eek þou schalt not swere for enuye ne for fauour ne for meede but / for rightwisnesse for declaring of it to worschip of god and helping of þin euencristen [596] and þ*er*fore eu*er*y man þat takiþ goddes name in ydil or falsly swériþ with his mouth or elles takiþ on him þe name of crist and callith himself a cristen man and lyueth agayn cristes lyuyng and his teching alle þay take cristes name in ydel [597] ¶ loke eek what saith seint peter Act*uum* ca°. iiijto ¶ Non est aliud nom*en* sub celo &c ¶ Ther is noon oþer name saith seint pet*er* vnder heuen ne ȝeuen to noon m*en* in which þay mowe be saued þat is to sayn but in þe name of ihū c*rist* [598] ¶ Tak heede eek how þe precious name of crist as saith seint poule ad philippenses .ij°. In no*min*e ihū &c ¶ That in þe name of ihū eu*er*y kne of heuenly creatures or erþely or of helle schulde bowe and [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] tremble to heeren it nempned. [599] ¶ Thanne semeþ it þat men þat sweren so horribly by his

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blessed name þat' þay despise it more bodyly þan dede þe cursed Iewes or elles þe deuel þat' tremblith whan he heerith his name

[600] ¶ Now certis sith þat' swering' but' it' be lawfully doon is so heihly defendid: moche wors is forswering' falsly and ȝit' needeles

[601] what say we eek' of' hem þat' deliten hem in swering' and holden it' a gentery or manly dede / to swere grete othis. and what' of' hem þat' of' verray vsage / ne cessen nouȝt' to swere grete oþis al be not' þe cause worþ a strawe: certes þis is horrible synne [602] ¶ Sweryng' sodeynly wiþout' auysement' is eek' a synne [603] ¶ But' let' vs now go to þilke horrible sweryng' of' adiuracio*u*n and co*n*iuracio*u*ns as [1]doon þese false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful or in a brigh̄t' swerd in a churche or in a fuyr or in þe schulder bon of' a scheep [604] ¶ I can not' sayn but' þat' þay doon cursedly and dampnably agains þe faith of' holy chirche

[605] what' say we of' hem þat' bilieuen on diuinailes as by flight' or by nois of' briddes or of' bestes or by sort' by geomancie. by dremes. by chirkyng' of' dores or crakking' of' howses. by gnawyng' of' rattis and such maner wrecchidnes [606] ¶ Certes al þis þing' is defended by god and holy chirche for whiche þay ben accursed til þay come to amendement þat' on such filthe bisetten here bileeue. [607] Charmes for woundes or malady of' me*n* or of' bestes if' þay take eny effect'. it' may be p*ar*aduenture þat' god suffreþ hit' for folk' schulde ȝeue þe more faiþ and reu*er*ence to his name

[608] ¶ Now wol I speke of' lesynge whiche generally is fals signifiaunce of' word in entent to desceyuen his euencristen [609] Som lesyng' is of' whiche þer cometh noon aua*u*ntage to noon wigh̄t' and som lesyng' torneþ to þe ease or profit' of' som man.

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and to damage of an oþer man [610] ¶ Anoþer lesyng for to saue his lif or his catel [. . . . . *no gap*] comeþ of delit/ for to lye. in which delit þay wol forge a long tale and paynte it with alle circu*m*staunces wher as þe ground of þe tale is fals [611] ¶ Som lesyng comeþ. For he wolde susteyne his word ¶ Som lesyng cometh of rechelesnes wiþoute auisement and semblable þinges

[612] ¶ lat vs now touche þe vice of flaterie which cometh not gladly but for drede or for coueitise [613] ¶ Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing. Flaterers ben þe deueles norices þat norisshen his children wiþ mylk of þe losingerie. [614] forsoþe Salamon saith þat flaterie is worse þan detraccio*u*n. for som tyme detraccio*u*n makith an hawteyn man be þe more humble for he dredith detraccio*u*n ¶ But certes flaterie makith a man to enhaunsen his hert/ and his countenaunce [615] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles enchauntours. For þay maken man to wene of himself þat he is like to þat he is nouȝt like. [616] þay ben like Iudas þat bitraised [. . . . . *no gap*] to selle him to his enemy þat is þe deuel [617] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles chapeleyns þat singen ay. placebo. [618] I rekene flaterers in þe vices of Ire. For ofte tyme if oon man be wroþ wiþ anoþ*er*. þ*a*nne wol he flatere som man to mayntene him in his querel

[619] Speke we now of such cursyng as comeþ of Irous hert malisoun generally may be said eu*er*y maner power of harm. such [1]cursyng bireueþ man fro þe regne of god as saiþ seint poule [620] ¶ And ofte tyme such cursyng wrongfully retourneþ agayn to hy*m* þat curseth as þat retourneþ agayn to his owne nest. [621] and ouer all*e* þinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children and ȝiue to þe deuel here engendrure as ferforth as in hem is Certis it is gret p*er*il and gret synne

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[622] ¶ let' vs þanne speke of' chydynge and reproche whiche þat' ben ful grete wou*n*des i*n* ma*n*nes hert' [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
[623] ¶ For certis vnneþe may a man plainly ben accordid w*ith* him þat' him openly reuyled and reproued and disclaundrid. þis is a ful grisly synne as c*rist*' saith in þe gospel. [624] and takith keep now þat' he þat' reprouеþ his neighebor. ouþ*er* he reprouеþ him by som harm of' peyne. [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
[625]. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
þanne tornith þe reproef' to ihū crist'. For peyne is sent' by þe rightwis sonde of' god and by his suffraunce be it meselrie or many oþer maladies. [626] and if' he repreue him vncharitably as þou holour þou dronkelewe harlot' and so forth þanne aperteyneth þat' to þe reioysing' of' þe deuel þat' euer haþ ioye þat' men doon synne. [627] And certis chidyng' may nought' come but' out of' a vileins herte ¶ For after þe abundau*n*ce of' þe herte spekeþ þe mouth ful ofte. [628] and ȝe schal vnderstonde þat' loke by any way whan any man schal chastise anoþ*er* þat' he be war fro chyding' or repreuyng'. For trewely but' he be war: he may ful lightly quiken þe fuyr of' anger and of' wraþþe which þat' he schulde quenchen: and p*ar* auenture sleþ þat' he mighte chaste with benignite. [629] for as saiþ salamon ¶ The amiable tonge is þe tree of' lif' þat' is to sayn of' lif' espirituel. and soþely dislaue tonge sleþ þe spirit of' him [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' is repreued [630] ¶ lo what' saith seint' augustyn ¶ Ther is no þing' so lik' þe fendes child as he þ*at*' ofte chideþ ¶ Seint' poule seiþ eek' I s*er*uaunt' of' god bihoueth nouȝt' to chide. [631] and þough þ*at*' chidy*n*g be a vileins þing' bitwixe alle maner folk/: ȝit' is it certes more vncouenable bitwix a man and his wif'. For þ*er* is neu*er* rest'

And *þer*fore saith Salamo*n* ¶ An hous þat is vncouered & droppyng and a chidyng wyf ben like [632] a man þat is in dropping hous in many partes þough he eschewe þe dropping *in* oon place: it droppeþ on him in anoþ*er* place ¶ So farith it by a chydinge wyf: But sche chide him in oon place: sche wol chide him in anoþ*er* [633] ¶ And *þer*fore better is a morsel of bred w*ith* ioye þan an hous ful of delices with chyding seiþ Salamon [634] [1] ¶ Seint poul saith ¶ O ȝe wo*m*men be ȝe sugettis to ȝoure housbondes as bihoueþ in god. And ȝe me*n* loueth ȝoure wyues ad Colocens*es* iij°.

[635] ¶ Afterward speke we of scornyng which is a wikked þing and sinful and namely whan he scornith a ma*n* for his goode work*es* [636] ¶ For certes suche scornes faren lik þe foule toode þat may nought endure þe soote smel of þe vine roote whan it florischith. [637] þese scorners ben partyng felawes wiþ þe deuel. For þay han ioye whan þe deuel wynneth and sorwe whan he leseth [638] ¶ Thay ben adu*er*saries of Ihū c*ri*st. for þay haten þat he loueth þat is to saye sauacio*u*n of soule

[639] Speke we now of wikked counseil ¶ For he *þat* wickid counseil ȝiueth. he is a traytour. for he deceyueþ him þat trusteþ in him ¶ vt achitofel ad absolone*m* ¶ But naþeles ȝet is his wikkid cou*n*seil first aȝe*n*s himself [640] ¶ For as saith the wise man ¶ Euery fals lyuyng haþ þis p*ro*prete in him self. þat he þat wil annoye anoþ*er* man: he annoyeth first himself. [641] ¶ and men schul vnderstonde þat men schulde nought take his counseil of fals folk ne of angry folk/ [. . . . . .] ne of folk þat louen specially to moche her oughne p*ro*fyt ne in to moche worldly. folk. namely in counselyng of soules

[642] Now comeþ þe synne of hem *þat* sowen and maken discord amonges folk which is a synne þat/

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crist' hateþ outrely. and no wonder is. for god died for to make concord. [643] and more schame do þay to crist' þan dede þay þat' him crucifiede ¶ For god loueth bettre þat' frendschipe be amonges folk' ¶ þanne he dide his owne body which þat/ he ȝaf' for vnite. þerfore ben þay likned to þe deuel þat' euer ben aboute to make discord

[644] ¶ Now comith þe sinne of' double tonge. suche as speken faire biforn folk' and wikkedly bihynde or elles þay make semblaunt as þough þay speke of' good entencioun or ellis in game & play and ȝit' þay speke in wikked entent'

[645] ¶ Now comeþ þe wreying' of' counseil þurgh which a man is famed ¶ Certes vnnethe may he restore þat' damage

[646] ¶ Now comeþ manace þat' is an open foly. For he þat' ofte man[a]ceth he threttith more þan he may parfourme ful ofte tyme

[647] ¶ Now comeþ Idel wordes þat' is wiþoute profyt' of' him þat' spekith þo wordes and eek' of' him þat' herkeneþ þo wordes. or elles ydel wordes ben þo þat ben needeles or wiþouten entent' of' naturel profyt' [648] and al be it' þat' ydil wordes ben som tyme venial synne: ȝit' schulde men doute hem. For we schuln ȝiue rekenynge of' hem bifore [1]god

[649] ¶ Now comith iangeling' þat/ may nouȝt' be wiþoute synne as saith Salamon ¶ It' is a signe of' apert' folie [650] and þerfore a philosophre whan men askid him how men schulde plese þe poeple and he answerde ¶ Do many goode werkes. and spek/ fewe iangeles

[651] ¶ After þis comeþ þe synne of' iapers þat' ben þe deueles apes For þay maken folk' to laughen at here iapes or iaperie as folk' doon at/ þe gaudes of' an ape / Suche iapes defendith seint' poule [652] ¶ Loke how þat' vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem

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þat' trauailen in þe *ser*uice of' crist'? Right' so conforten þe violent' wordes and knakkis and iaperies hem þat' trauayle in þe seruice of' þe deuyl [653] ¶ These ben þe synnes þat/ comeþ of' [. . . . . *no gap*] Ire and of' oþer synnes

[*No break in the MS.*]

[654] ¶ **Remedium contra Iram**

REmedye agayns ire is a v*er*tue þat' me*n* clepe mansuetude. þat' is deboneirte. And eek' anoþ*er* v*er*tue þat' me*n* clepe pacience or suffera*u*nce.

[655] debonairete wiþdrawith and restreigneþ þe stiringes and þe moeuynges of' ma*n*nys corrage i*n* his herte in such manere þat' þai ne skip not' out' by anger ne by Ire [656] ¶ Suffraunce suffrith swetely al þe annoyaunce and þe wronges þat' me*n* doon to man outward [657] ¶ Seint Ierom saiþ þus of' debonairte. þat it doþ noon harm to no wight' ne saith ne for noon harm þat' men doon ne sayn. he ne eschaufith nought' agayns his reso*u*n [658] ¶ This v*er*tu comiþ som tyme of' nature ¶ For as saith þe philosopher man is a quik' þing' by nature and tretable to goodnesse ¶ But' whan debonairete is enformed of' grace? þan is it' þe more worþ

[659] ¶ Pacience þat' is anoþer remedie. agains Ire is a vertu þat' suffreth swetely euery mannes goodnes as is not' wroþ for noon harm þat' is doon to him. [660] þe philosopher saith þat' pacience is þilke vertue þ*at*' suffrith deboneirly alle þe outrages of' adu*er*site and eu*er*y wickid word [661] ¶ This v*er*tue makiþ a ma*n* lik' to god and makith him goddes oughne dere child as saiþ c*ri*st ¶ þis v*er*tu destroyeþ þin enemy and þ*er*fore saith þe wise man ¶ If' þou wolt' venquisch̄ þin enemy lerne to suffre [662] ¶ And þou schalt' vnderstonde þ*at*' ma*n* suffrith foure maners

of greuaunces in outward þinges. agains whiche he moot haue foure maners of pacience

[663] ¶ The firste greuaunce is of wicked wordes. þilke suffred Ihū crist wiþoute grucching ful paciently whan þe iewes despised him and reproued him ful ofte. [664] suffre þou *þer*fore paciently ¶ For þe wise man saiþ ¶ If [1]þou striue with a fool. þough þe fool be wroþ or þough he laughhe algate þou schalt haue no rest [665] ¶ That oþer greuaunce outward is to haue damage of þi catel: *þer* agayn suffred *crist* ful paciently whan he was despoylid of al þat he had in his lif and þat nas but his cloþis [666] ¶ The þridde greuaunce is. a man to haue harm in his body. þat suffred *crist*/ ful paciently in al his passioun [667] ¶ The ferþe greuaunce is in outrageous labour *in* werkis wherfore I say þat folk *þat* maken here *ser*uaunt; to trauaile to greuously or out of tyme as on haly dayes. soþely þay doon greet synne [668] ¶ Here against suffred *crist* ful paciently and taughte vs pacience whan he bar vpon his blisful schulder þe croys vpon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. [669] here may men lerne to be pacient. For certes nought oonly cristen ben pacient for þe loue of ihū *crist* and for guerdo*un* of þe blisful life *þat* is p*er*durable But þe olde paynymes þat neuer were cristen comau*n*dedin and vseden þe v*er*tu of pacience

[670] ¶ A philosopher vpon a tyme *þat* wolde haue bete his disciple for his grete trespas. For which he was gretly amoeued and brought a ȝerde to scoure þe child. [671] & wha*n* þe child saugh þe ȝerde: he sayde to his maister ¶ what þenke ȝe to do ¶ I wolde bete þe quod þe maister for þi correccio*un* [672] Forsoþe quod þe child. ȝe oughte first correcte ȝoure silf *þat* han left al ȝoure pacience for þe gilt of a child [673] ¶ For soþe quod þe maist*er* al wepyng. þou

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saist' soth. haue þou þe ȝerde my deere sone and correcte me for myn impacience. [674] Of' pacience comeþ obedience. þurgh which a man is obedient' to crist/ and to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient' in crist'. [675] and vnderstonde wel þat' obedience is parfyt'. whan a man doþ gladly & hastily with good herte outrely al þat' he scholde do [676] ¶ Obedience is generally to parforme þe doctrine of' god and of' his souueraignes to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant' in alle rightwisnes.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[677]

AFter þe synne of' enuye and Ire. now wol I speke of' [. . . *no gap*] accidie. For enuye blendith þe hert of' a man and Ire troublith a man and accidie makith him heuy. þoughtful. and wrawe [678] ¶ Enuye and Ire maken bitternes in herte. which bitternesse is mooder of' accidie and bynimith þe loue of' alle goodnes. þanne is accidie þe anguische of' trouble hert' and seint' augustyn saith [. . . . . *no gap*] [679] ¶ Certes þis is a dampnable synne. For it' doþ wrong' to Ihū [1]crist' in as moche as it bynymeþ þe seruice þat' we ought' to do to crist' wiþ alle diligence as saiþ Salomon [680] ¶ But' accidie doþ noon such diligence. he doþ alle þing' wiþ anoy and with drawenes. slaknes and excusacioun. and with ydelnes & vnlust' for which þe book' saith ¶ Accursed be he þat' doþ þe seruice of' god necligently [681] [. . . . . *no gap*] enemy to euery astaat' of' man ¶ For certes þestat' of' [. . . . . [682] . . . *no gap in the MS.*] Innocence. as was þastate of' adam biforn þat' he fel in to synne in which estate he is holden to worche as in herying' and honouryng' of' god [683] ¶ Anoþer astat' is þe state of' sinful man. in which estate. men ben holden

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to labore in praying' to god for amendeme*nt*' of' her synnes. and þat' he wolde graunte he*m* to rise of' here synnes [684] ¶ Anoþ*er* estaat' is þestate of' which he is holde to werkis of' penitence and certes to alle þese þinges is accidie enuye contrarie for it loueþ no busynes at al [685] ¶ Now certis þis foule synne accidie is eek' a ful gret' enemy to þe liflode of' þe body For it' hath no p*ur*ueaunce a;ens temp*er*el necessite. for it' forslowthith and forsluggith and destroyeth all*e* goodes temporels by rechelesnes

[686] ¶ The ferþe þing' is þat' accidie is like hem þat' ben in þe peyne of' helle by cause of' her slouþe and of' her heuynes For þay þat' ben dampned ben so bounde þat' þay may nought wel do ne wel þenke [687] ¶ Of' accidie cometh first þat' a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes. and makith that god haþ abhominacio*u*n of' such accidie as saith seint' Ioh*a*n.

[688] ¶ Now comeþ slouþe þ*at*' wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce For soþely slouþe is so tendre and so delicat' as saith Salomon þat' he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce. and þ*er*fore he schendeth al þat he doth [689] ¶ Agayns þis roten hertid synne of accidie and of' slouthe schulden me*n* exercise hemself' to do goode werkes and manly and v*er*tuously cacchin corrage wel to doo. þink*ing*' þat' oure lord ihū c*ri*st' quiteþ euery good dede be it neuer so lyte. [690] ¶ Vsage of' labour is a ful greet' þing'. for it makith as saiþ seint Bernard þe laborer to haue stronge armes and harde synewes ¶ And slouthe maketh he*m* feble and tendre [691] ¶ Thanne comeþ drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes? For certes what' þat' is enclined to don synne him þinkith it' is so gret' emprise for to vndertake to doon werkes of' goodnes [692] / as [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . *no gap*] saiþ seynt gregory

[693] ¶ Now comeþ wanhope þat' is despair of' þe mercy of' god þat' comeþ som tyme of' to moche outrageous sorwe [1]and som tyme of' to moche drede ymagynynge þat' he haþ do so moche synne þat' it' wil not' auaile him þough he wolde repent hi*m* and forsake synne. [694] þurgh which despeir or drede he abundith al his herte to alle maner synne as seith seint' augustin. [695] whiche dampnable synne if' þat' it' continue vnto his lyues ende it is cleped synnyng' of' þe holy gost'. [696] This horrible synne is so p*er*ilous. þat' he þat' is despaired þer is no felonye ne no synne þat he doutith for to do. as schewed wel by Iudas. [697] Certes aboue all*e* synnes. þan is þis synne most' displesant' to c*rist*' and most' adu*er*sarie [698] sothely he þat' despisith him is like þe coward campio*un* recreaunt' þat' seith recreaunt wiþoute neede. allas allas needeles is he recreaunt and needeles despaired [699] ¶ Certes þe m*er*cy of' god is euer redy to þe penitent' and is aboue alle his werkes. [700] allas can not' a man byþenk' him on þe gospel of' seint luk/ wher as crist' saith þat' as wel schal þer be ioye in heuen vpon a synful man þat' doþ penitence as vpon nynety and nyne þat' ben rightful me*n* þ*at*' [. . . . . *no gap*] needen no penitence [701] ¶ loke forþer i*n* þe same gospel þe ioye and þe fest' of' þe goode ma*n* þat' had lost' his sone. whan þe sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader [702] ¶ Can not' þay remembre eek' þat' as saiþ seint' luk' xxiij°. how þat' þe þef' þat' was hangid biside iħū crist' sayde ¶ lord remembre of' me whan þou comest' in to þy regne [703] ¶ Forsoþe saith crist'. to day þou schalt' be wiþ me in paradis [704] ¶ Certis þer is noon so horrible synne of'

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man þat' it' may in his lif' be destroyed with penitence
þorugh vertu of' passioun of' þe deth of' crist
[705] ¶ Allas what needith it' man þanne to be despaired
sith þat' his mercy is so redy and large. aske and haue
[706] ¶ Thanne comeþ sompnolent' þat' is sluggy
slumbring' which makiþ a man ben heuy and dul in
body and in soule. and þis synne comeþ of' sloupe
[707] and certes þe tyme þat' by way of' resoun man
schulde nouȝt' slepe þat' is by þe morwe but' if' þer were
cause resonable [708] For soþely þe morwe tyde is
most/ couenable to a man to say his prayers and for
to þenk' vpon his god and to honoure god and to
ȝeue almes to þe pore þat' first' comeþ in þe name
of' crist' [709] ¶ lo what' saith Salamon. ¶ who-so wol
by þe morwe arise and seeke me schal fynde
[710] ¶ þan comeþ negligence that/
rekkith of' no þing' and how þat' ignorauncе be
moder of' alle harm? Certis necgligence is þe norice
[711] ¶ Necligence doþ no force whan he schal doon
a þing' whethir he doo it' wel or baddely

[712] ¶ Of' þe remedy of' þese tuo synnes as saith
[1]þe wise man ¶ That' he þat' dredith god he sparith nouȝt'
to do þat' him ought' to don. [713] and he þat' loueth
god wol do diligence to plese god by his werkis
and abounde himself' with alle his mightes wel for to doon
[714] ¶ Thanne comith ydelnes þat is þe ȝate of' alle
harmes. and ydil man is like an hous þat/ haþ noone
walles. þe deueles may entre on euery syde or schete
at' him at' discouert/ by temptaciouns on euery syde
[715] ¶ This ydelnes is þe thurrok/ of' alle wickid
vileyns þoughtes and of' alle iangles tryfles and of'
alle ordure [716] ¶ Certes þe heuen is ȝeuen to hem þat'
wol laboure and nouȝt' to ydil folk' ¶ Eke dauid saith
That / þay ne ben not in þe labour of' men ne þay schul
not' be wiped with men þat is to sain in purgatorie

¶ Omnium malorum mater est negligencia

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[717] ¶ Certes þanne semeth it þat' þay schal be tormentid wiþ þe deuel in helle but' if' þay don penitence

[718] ¶ þanne comith þe synne þat' men clepe tarditas. as whan a man is so latrede or tarying' er he wil torne to god. and certis þat' is a gret foly. he is like him þat' fallith in to þe diche and wol not arise / [719] And þis vice cometh of' a fals hope þat' he þinkith he schal lyue longe. but' þat' hope fayleþ ful ofte

[720] ¶ þanne comith laches. þat' is he when he bigynneth any good werk' anoon he wol forlete it' and stynte as doon þay þat/ han eny wight' to gouerne. and ne take of' hem no more keep anoon as þay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy [721] ¶ þese ben þe newe schepherdes þat' leten her schep wityngely go renne to þe wolf' þat' is in þe breres or don no force of' her oughne gouernaunce. [722] Of' þis comeþ pouert' and destruccioun boþe of' spirituel and of' temperel þinges ¶ Thanne comeþ a maner of' coldenesse þat' freseþ al þe hert' of' man [723] þanne cometh vndeuocioun þurgh which a man is so blunt' & as saiþ seint' Bernard he haþ such a langour in soule þat he may neyþeir rede ne synge in holy chirche ne heere ne þinke on deuocioun in holy chirche ne trauayle with his hondes in no good werk' þat' nys þo him vnsauory and al [724] þanne waxith he slow and slombry and soone wol he be wroþ and soone is enclined to hate and to enuye [725] ¶ þanne comith þe synne of' worldly sorwe such as is clepid tristicia þat' sleth man as saith seint poule [726] ¶ For certis such sorwe werkith to þe deth of' þe soule. & of' þe body also. For þer of' cometh þat' a man is anoyed of' his oughne lif'. [727] which sorwe schorteþ ful ofte þe lif' of' a man or þat' his tyme is come by way of' kynde

[*No break in the MS.*]

[728] ¶ Agains þis horrible [1]synne of accidie and þe braunches of þe same þer is a vertu þat is cleped fortitudo or strengþe þat is affecciou*n* þurgh whic̄ a man despiseth all*e* noyous þinges [729] ¶ This v*er*tu is so mighty & so vigurous þat it dar wiþstonde mighty and wisely kepe hi*m*self from p*er*ils þat ben wicked and wrastil agains þe assautes of þe deuel. [730] For it enhaunsith and enforceþ þe soule. Right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble. For þis fortitudo may endure by long sufferaunce þe trauailes þat ben conuenables

[731] ¶ This vertu haþ many spices. þe first is cleped magnanimite þat is to sayn gret corrage. For certis þer bihoueþ gret corrage agains accidie lest þat it ne swolwe not þe soule by þe synne of sorwe or destroye it by wanhope [732] ¶ This v*er*tu makith folk vndertake harde þinges and greuous þinges by his owne wille willfuly and resonably. [733] and for als moche as þe deuel fig̃hteth agaynst a ma*n* more by queyntise and by sleig̃ht þan by strengþe: þ*er*fore many a ma*n* schal ayeinstonde him by witte. and by resoun and by discrecio*un*. [734] Thanne is þer þe v*er*tu of faith and hope in god and in his seintes to eschew. and to acomplice þe goode werkes in þe whiche he p*ur*posith fermely to continue. [735] thanne comeþ seurte or sikernes and þat is wha*n* a man doutith no trauaile in tyme comy*ng* of good werk þat a ma*n* haþ bygonne [736] ¶ þanne comeþ magnificence þat is to say whan a ma*n* doth and p*ar*formith grete werkes of goodnesse þat he hath bygonne. and þat is þende why þat men schulden do goode werkes. for in þe accomplising of grete goode werkes liþ þe grete guerdou*n*. [737] þanne is þer constaunce þat is stablenes of corrage and þis schulde ben in herte by stedefast faiþ. and in mouthe. and in

[1 *leaf* 273, *back*]

beryng'. and in cheer and in deede. [738] eek' þer ben mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyuers werkis and in consideracio*un* of' þe peyne of' helle and of' þe ioye of' heuen and in þe trust' of' þe hyhe grace of' þe holy gost'. þat' wil ȝeue him mig̃ht' to parforme his good entent.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[739] De Auaricia [*from margin*]

AFter accidie? I wil speke of' auarice and of' coueytise. Of' whiche synnes For sothely whan saith sein poule þat' þe roote of' alle eueles & harmes is coueytise/ [740] and þat' þe hert' of' man is confoundid in it self' and troublid and þat' þe soule haþ lost' þe comfort of' god. þanne seekith he an ydel solas of' worldly þinges.

[741] [1]¶ Auarice after þe descripcio*un* of' seint' austyn. is a likerousnes i*n* hert' to haue erþely þinges [742] ¶ Some oþer folk' sayn þat' auarice is for to purchace many erþely þinges and no þing' ȝeue to hem þat' han neede [743] ¶ And vnderstonde þat' auarice ne stont' not' oonly i*n* lond ne in catel? But' som tyme in science and in glorie and eny maner outrageous þinges is auarice [744] ¶ And þe difference bytwixe auarice and coueytise is þis. Coueitise is for to coueyte suche þinges as þou hast' not' [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [745] ¶ And auarice is a synne þat' is ful dampnable. For al holy writ curseth it' and spekith agayn þat' vice. for it doþ wrong' to Ihū *crist'*. [746] For it bireueth him þe loue þat' men to him owen and turnith it' bakward agains al resou*n*. [747] and makith þat' þe auarous ma*n* hath more hope in his catel þan in ihū *crist'*. and [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [748] þ*er*fore saith

seint poule ad Ephes*ios*. þat' an auerous ma*n* is þe þraldom of' ydolatrie

[749] ¶ what' difference is þer bitwen an ydolaster and an auarous man. but' þat' an ydolaster p*er* aduenture hadde but' a mawmet/ [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

no gap] [750] ¶ and certes þe synne of' mawmetrie is þe firste þing' þat' god defendith in þe ten comaunde-men*t*ȝ as beriþ witnes in ex*odo capitulo* [751] þou schalt/ haue noone false goddes biforn me. ne þou schalt' make to the no graue þing'. thus is he an auerous ma*n* þat' loueth his tresor toforn god ¶ And an ydolast*er* [752] þurgh his cursed synne of' auarice and coueytise comen þese harde lordschipes þurgh whiche thay ben distreyned by talliages custumes and cariages more þan here duete of' resou*n* is. and elles take þay of' here bonde men amercimentes whiche mighte more resonably ben callid extorciouns þan mercymentis. [753] of' whiche mersyments and raunsonyng' of' bonde men some lordes stywardes seyn þ*at*' it is rightful. For as moche as a cherl haþ no temp*er*el þing' þ*at*' it nys his lordes as þay sayn [754] ¶ But' certes þise lordschipes doon wrong' þat' bireuen here bonde men þinges þat' þay neuer ȝaue hem. Augustine [. . . *blank in MS.*] [755] soth is þe condicio*un* of' þraldom and þe firste cause of' þraldom is sinne Genes*is*

[756] ¶ Thus may ȝe seen þat' þe gilt' deserued þraldom but' not' nature [757] ¶ wherfore þese lordschipes schulden nouȝt' moche glorifie in here lordschipes sith þat' by naturel condicio*un* þay ben nouȝt' lordes ouer þalles. but' for þraldom com first' by þe desert' of' synne [758] ¶ And forther-ouer þer as þe lawe sayth þat' temporel goodes of' bonde folk*es* been þe goodes of' her lordschipes: ȝe þat' is to [1] vnderstonde. þe goodes of' þe emp*er*o*ur* to defende in here right'. but' not' to robbe hem ne to reue hem. [759] and þ*er*fore

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seiþ Seneca. ¶ Thi prudence schulde liue benignely wiþ þi þrallis [760] þilke þat þay clepe thralles ben goddes poeple. For humble folk ben cristes frendes þay ben contubernially wiþ þe lord

[761] ¶ Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles springen. of such seed springe lordes. as wel may þe cherl be saued as þe lord. [762] The same deth þat takith þe cherl [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] as þou woldist þi lord dide wiþ þe if þou were in his plyt. [763] Euery sinful man is a cherl as to synne ¶ I rede þe certes þat þou lord werke in such a wise wiþ þy cherles þat þay raþer loue þe þan drede þe. [764] I wot wel þer is degre aboue degre as resoun is and skil þat men don her deuoir þer as it is dewe. ¶ But certes extorciouns and despit of oure vndirlinges is dampnable

[765] ¶ And forþermore vnderstonde wel þat conquerours or tyrauntes maken ful ofte þralles of hem þat born ben of als royal blood as ben þay þat hem conqueren. [766] þis name of cherldom was neuer erst · couth til noe sayde þat his sone chanaan schulde be þral of his breþeren for his synne [767] ¶ what say we þanne of hem þat pylen and doon extorciouns to holy chirche ¶ Certis the swerdes þat men ȝeuen first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd signifieth faith and þat he schulde defende holy chirche [. . . . . *no gap*] [768] and as seith seint austin. Thay ben þe deueles wolues þat stranglen þe scheep of ihū crist. and doon wors þan wolues. [769] for soþely whan þe wulf haþ ful his wombe ⁊ he stintith to strangle scheep. but soþly þe pilours and þe destroyers of þe goodes of holy chirche ne doon nouȝt so ⁊ For þai stynte neuer to pile. [770] ¶ Now as I haue sayd. sith so is. þat synne was first cause of þraldom ⁊ þanne is it

þus. þat' ilke tyme þat' al þis world was in synne. þanne was al þis world in þraldom and in subieccio*un* [771] But' certis sith þe tyme of' *grace* com' God ordeyned þat' so*m*me folk' schulde be more heigh in estaate and in degre and so*m*me folkes more lowe and þat' euerich schulde be serued in here estate and in degree [772] ¶ And þ*er*fore in so*m*me contrees þere þay ben thralles whan þay han turned hem to þe faith' þay make here þralles free out of' thraldom ¶ And þ*er*for certis þe lord oweth to his ma*n* þat' þe ma*n* owith to þe lord. [773] ¶ The pope callith himself' *seruaunt* of' *seruaunts* of' god ¶ But' for as moche as þe staat/ of' holy chirche [. . . . . *no gap*] to þe co*m*mune p*rofit*' might' nought' haue ben kepte ne pees [1]ne reste in erthe. but' if' god had ordeyned som ma*n* of' heiher degre and some men of' lower' [774] þ*er*fore was soueraignte ordeyned to kepe and to mayntene and defende her vnderlynges or her subiectis in resoun as ferforth as it lith in her power and not' to destroye ne confounde hem [775] ¶ wherfore I say þ*at*' þilke lordes þat' be like wolues þat' deuouren þe possessio*un* of' þe catel of' pore folk' wrongfully wiþoute mercy or mesure' [776] þay schul receyue by þe same mesure þat' þay han mesured to pouer folk' þe mercy of' ihū c*rist*' but' if' it be amendid [777] ¶ Now comeþ deceipt' bitwixe marchau*n*t and marchau*n*t'. and þou schalt' vnderstonde þat' marchau*n*dise is *in* many maneres. þat' oon is bodily. and þ*at*' o*per* is gostly. þat' oon is honest' and leful. and þat' o*per* is dishonest' & vnleful [778] ¶ Of' þilke bodily marchau*n*dise þ*at*' is honest' and leful is þis. þat' þer as god haþ ordeyned þat a regne or a cuntre is suffisaunt/ to himself'. þanne is it honest/ and leful þat' of' þe abundau*n*ce of' þis contre þe men helpe anoþ*er* cuntre þat' is more needy [779] ¶ And þ*er*fore þer moote be marchau*n*t; to bringe fro þat' oon cuntre to þat' oþer her march-

[1 *leaf* 275]

au*n*dise [780] ¶ That oþ*er* marchaundise þat men hauntyn with fraude and treccherie and deceipt/ with lesynges and fals othis is cursed and dampnable [781] ¶ Espirituel marchau*n*diȝe is p*r*oprely symonie þat is ententyf desire to beye þi*n*g/ espirituel þat is þing þat apperteyneth to þe seintuarie of god and to þe cure of þe soule [782] þis desir is if so be þat a man do his diligence to parforme it. al be it þat his desir take noon effect. ȝit is it/ to him a dedly synne. and if he be ordrid he is irreguler [783] ¶ Certis Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus þat wolde han bought for temporel catel þe ȝifte þat god had ȝiuen by þe holy gost to seint petir and to þapostlis [784] ¶ And þ*er*for vnderstonde þat boþe he þat sellith and he þat bieth þinges espirituele ben cleped Symonials be it by catel be it by p*r*ocurem*e*nt or by fleisshly prayere of his frendes eiþer flesshly frendes or spirituel frendes [785] ¶ Fleisshly in tuo maneres as by kynrede or oþer frendes ¶ Sothely if þay pray for hi*m*. it is not worth [. . . . . *no gap*] if he take þe benefice it is Symonie. and if he be worthy & able. it is non [786] ¶ That oþer is whan ma*n* or wo*m*man prayen for folk to avaunce hem oonly for wikkid fleisshly affecciou*n* þat þay haue vnto þe p*er*sone and þat is ful Symonye. [787] but certis in s*er*uice [. . . . . *no gap*] moot he be honest and ellis not. and eek þat [1]it be withoute bargaynynge and þat þe p*er*sone be able [788] ¶ For as saith seint Damase ¶ Alle þe synnes of þis world at þe reward of þis synne is a þing of nought. For it is þe gretteste synne þat may be after þe synne of lucifer and antecrist [789] ¶ For by þis synne god forlesith þe chirche and þe soule þ*at* he bouȝt wiþ his precious blood by hem þat ȝeuen chirches to he*m* þat ben not digne [790] ¶ For þay putten in þeues þat

[1 *leaf* 275, *back*]

stelen þe soules of' ihū *crist'* and destroyen patrimoygne. [791] by suche vndigne *prestis* and curates. han lewed men þe lasse reuerence of' þe sacrament/ of' holy chirche and suche ȝeueres of' chirches putten out' þe children of' *crist'*. and putten in to þe chirche þe deueles oughne sone. [792] þay sellen soules þat' lambes schulde kepe to þe wolf' þat' stranglith hem. And *þer*fore schul þay neuer haue part' of' þe pasture of' lambes þat' is þe blisse of' heuen [793] ¶ Now comeþ hasardrie wiþ his appurtenaunce. as tables. and rafles. of' whiche comeþ deceipt'. fals othis. chidynges and alle raueynes. blasphemy*ng*'. and reneying' of' god and hate of' his neighebors. wast' of' goodes out of' tyme. and som tyme manslaugh*ter*. [794] ¶ Certes hasardours ne mowe not' be wiþoute gret' synne whil þay haunte þat' craft' [795] ¶ Of' auarice comeþ eek' lesynges. þefte and fals witnesse and fals oþes ¶ And ȝe schul vndirstonde þat' þese ben gretesynnes and expresce agains þe comau*n*deme*n*tȝ of' god as I haue sayd [796] ¶ Fals witnesse is in word and eek' i*n* dede. In word: as for to bireue þin neighebor his good name by þy witnessinge. or bireue him his catel or his heritage by þy fals witnesse. whan þou for Ire or for meede. or for envie berest' witnes or accusist' him or excusist' him by þy fals witnes. or ellis excusist' þiself' falsly. [797] ware ȝow questemong*er*s and notaries ¶ Certis for fals witnessynge was Susanna in ful gret' sorwe and peyne and many anoþer mo [798] ¶ The synne of' thefte is eek' expresse agayns goddes hestis & þat' in tuo maners corporel and spirituel. [799] Corporel: as for to take þy neighebo*ur*s catel agayns his wille. be it by force or by sleight. be it by mette. or by mesure. [800] by stelynge eeke of' fals enditements vpon him and in borwyng' of' þin neghebores catel*le* in entent' neuer to paye/ and in semblable þinges. [801] Espirituel þefte. is sacrilege þat' is to sayn hurt-

ynge of' holy þinges. or of' þing' sacred of' *crist'* ¶ Sacrilege is in tuo [1] maneres þat' oon is by resoun of' holy place as chirches or chirchehawes. [802] For whiche euery vileins synne þat' men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege or eu*er*y violence i*n* semblable place ¶ þat' oþer maner is. as þo þat wiþdrawen falsly þe rightes þat' longen to holy chirche [803] ¶ [. . . *no gap*] and generally sacrilege is to reue holy þi*n*g' fro holy place. and vnholy þing' out of' holy place. or holy thing' out of' holy place

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Remedi*um* con*tra* Auariciam [*from margin*]

[804]

NOw schul ȝe vnderstonde þat' þe releuynge of' auarice is misericorde and pite largely taken. And me*n* might axen why þat' misericord and pite is relieuyng' of' auarice. [805] ¶ Certes þe auaricious man schewith no pite ne misericorde to þe needeful man. For he delitith him in kepyng' of' his tresor and nouȝt' in þe rescowyng' ne relieuyng' of' his euencristen. & þ*er*fore speke I first' of' misericord [806] ¶ Thanne is misericord as saith þe philosopher a vertu. by which þe corrage of' a man is stired by þe myseise of' him þat' is myseysed. [807] vpon which misericorde folwith in p*ar*formynge of' chariteable werkis of' misericord. [808] ¶ And certes þese moeuen men to þe misericord of' ihū *crist'* *þat'* ȝaf' himself' for oure gult'. and suffred deþ for misericord and forȝaf' vs oure original synne [809] and þer by relessid vs fro peyne of' helle and amenusid þe peynes of' purgatorie by penitence and ȝeueth grace wel to do and at þe laste þe ioye of' heuen [810] ¶ The spices of' misericorde ben for to loue and for to ȝiue. and eek' for to forȝiue and for to relesse and for to haue pite in herte and compassio*u*n of' þe meschief' of' his

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euencristen and eek' chastiȝe þe as neede is [811] ¶ Anoþer maner of' remedye agayns auarice is resonable largesse but' sothely here bihouith þe consideracio*un* of' þe grace of' ihū crist' and of' his temporel goodes and eek' of' his goodes p*er*durable þat' crist ȝaf' vs. [812] and eek' to haue rememb*ra*nce of' þe deþ þat/ he schal resceyue he noot not' whanne [. . . *no gap*] and eke he schal forgon al þat he hath saue oonly þat' he haþ dispendid in goode werkes

[813] ¶ But' for als moche as some folk' ben vnresonable men oughte to eschiewe foly largesse þam clepen wast/ [814] Certes he þat' is fool-large ne ȝiueþ nouȝt' his catel. [. . . . . *no gap*] Sothely what' þing' þat' he ȝiueth for vayn glorie as to mynstrals and to folk' for to bere his renoun in þe world: he haþ synne and noon almes [815] ¶ Certes he lesith foule his goodes þat' sekith wiþ þe ȝift' [1]of' his good no þing' but' synne. [816] he is like to an hors *þat'* sekith raþer to drynke drouy watir and trouble þan for to drinke watir of' þe welle þat' is cleer. [817] And for as moche as þay ȝiue þer as þay schuld not' ȝiue: to hem appendith þilke malis*oun* þat' crist' schal ȝiue at' þe day of' doom to hem *þat'* schal be da*m*pned.

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ De Gula [*from margin*]

[818] AFter auarice comeþ Glotenye which is expresse eke agayns þe comaundeme*n*t of' god. Glotenye is vnresonable and desordeyned coueytise to ete and to dry*n*ke. [. . . . . *no gap*] [819] þis synne corruptid al þis world as is wel schewed i*n* þe synne of' adam. and of' Eua ¶ loke eek' what' saith seint poul of' glotouns [820] ¶ Many saith seint/ poul gon of whiche

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I haue ofte said to ȝow and now I say it wepyng ¶ That thenemyes of þe cros of crist of whiche þende is deth and of whiche here wombe is here god and here glorie in confusio*un* þat so saueren erþely þi*n*ges [821] ¶ he þat is vsant [. .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [822] to þis synne hath many spices ¶ The firste is dronkenes þat is thorrible sepulture of mannes resoun. And whan man is dronken he hath lost/ his resou*n* and þis is dedly synne [823] ¶ But schortly whan þat a man is not wont to strong drinke and p*ar* auenture ne knowiþ not þe strengþe of þe dry*n*k or hath feblesse in his heed or haþ trauayled þurgh whiche he drynkith þe more and be sodeynly caught wiþ drynke it is no dedly synne but venial [824] ¶ The secounde spice of dedly synne is. whan þe spirit of a man wexith al trouble for drunkenesse. and bireueþ him his witte and his discressio*un* [825] ¶ The þridde spice of glotouns is whan a man deuoureth his mete and haþ no rightful maner of etyng [826] ¶ þe ferþe is whan þurgh þe grete abundau*n*ce of his mete þe humo*ur*s of his body been distemprid [827] ¶ þe fifte is þe Idilnes by to moche drinking. For which a man som tyme forgetith by þe morwe what he dide at eue or on þe night bifore

[828] In oþer maner ben distinct þe spices of glotonye after seint Gregory ¶ The firste is for to ete or drynke byfore tyme to ete ¶ The secou*n*d is. whan ma*n* ȝiueth him to delicate mete or drinke [829] ¶ The þridde is. whanne man takith to moche þ*er*of ouer mesure ¶ The ferthe is curiosite w*ith* gret entent to make and app*ar*ayle his mete ¶ The fifte is. For to ete to gredely [830] ¶ These ben þe fyue fyngres of þe deueles hand. by whiche he drawith folk to synne. /

[831]
[1] AGayns Glotonye is þe remedie abstinence as saiþ Galien. But þat holde I nouȝt meritorie. If he do it oonly for þe hele of his body ¶ Seint austyn wol þat abstinence be don for vertu and wiþ pacience. [832] Abstinence he saith is litil worth but if a man haue good wille *þer*to and but it be enforced by pacience. and by charite. and þat men doon it for goddes sake and in hope to haue þe blisse of heuen

[833] ¶ The felawes of abstine*nce* ben attemp*er*a*u*nce þat holdith þe mene in alle þinges. eek schame þat eschiewith al dishoneste. Suffisaunce þat seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes ne doþ no force of to outrageous apparaillyng of mete [834] ¶ Mesure also þat restreyneþ by resoun the dislaue appetit of etyng. Sobernes also restreyneþ [. . . . . .] [835] . . . .] þe delicat wille to ete and þe lasse leysir [. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ De luxuria

[836]
AFter Glotonye þanne cometh leccherie. For þese two synnes ben so neih cosyns þat ofte tyme þay wol not departe. [837] Vn*de* paul*us* ad Ephes*ios* ¶ Nolite i*n*ebriari vino &c. God wot þis synne is ful displesaunt þing to god. vino in quo e*st* luxuria. For he sayde himself. Do no leccherie. and *per*fore he putte gret peyne agayn þis synne / in þe olde lawe. [838] If a wo*m*man þral were take in þis synne. sche scholde be beten with stoones to þe deth. and if sche were a gentil wo*m*man: sche schulde be slay*n* wiþ stoones. / and if sche were a bisschoppis douȝter: sche schulde be brent by goddis comaundement. [839] ¶ Forther ouer by þe synne of leccherie: god dreinte al þe world at þe

diluue ¶ And after þat' he dreynte fyue citees with thonder layt' and sonk' hem in to helle

[840] ¶ Now let' vs thanne speke of' þilke stynkyng' synne of' leccherie þat' men clepen aduoutry of' weddid folk' þat' is to sayn if' þat' oon of' hem be weddid or elles boþe [841] ¶ Seint' Ioh*an* saith þat' aduoutris schuln be in helle in watir brennyng' of' fuyr and of' brimston. In fuyr for þe leccherie. In brimston For þe stynk' or her ordure. [842] ¶ Certis þe brekyng' of' þis sacrament' is an horrible þing'. hit' was makid of' god himself' in paradis Confermed of' ihū c*ri*st' as witnesseth seint' Mathew ¶ A man schal lete fader and mooder and take him to his wif' and þay schul ben two in oon fleisch [843] ¶ This sacrame*nt*' bitokeneþ þe knyttyng' togider of' crist' and of' holy chirche [844] nat' oonly þat' god forbad aduotrie in dede: but' eek' he comaunded þat' þou scholdest' [1]not' coueyte þy neyhebors wif' [845] ¶ In þis heste seiþ seint' austyn is forboden al maner coueytise to do leccherie ¶ lo what' seiþ seint' mathew in þe gospel. that' who-so seth a wo*m*man to coueytise of' his lust': he haþ doon lecchery wiþ hir in his herte. [846] ¶ here may ȝe se þat' nouȝt' oonly þe dede of' þis synne is forboden: but' eek' þe desir to do þat' synne [847] ¶ This cursed synne annoyeth greuosly he*m* þat' it' haunten and first' to here soule. for he obligith it' to synne and to pyne of' þe deþ þ*at*' is p*ar*durable [848] ¶ vnto þe body annoyeþ it' greuously. also for it dreyeþ him and wastith hi*m* & schent' him. and of' his blood he makith sacrifice to þe deuel of' helle ¶ It wastith eek' his catel and his substaunce. [849] and certes if' þat' it be a foul þing' a man to waste his catel on wo*m*men: ȝit' is it' a fouler þing' whan þat' for such ordure wo*m*men dispende vpon men here catel and here substau*n*ce [850] ¶ This synne as saith þe p*r*ophete byreueth man and wo*m*man her good fame and al here honour. and it' is ful pleasau*n*t' to þe deuel. For þer by

[1 *leaf* 277, *back*]

wynneth he þe moste pray of' þis world [851] ¶ And right' as a marchaunt' deliteþ hi*m* most' in chaffare þat' he haþ most' auauntage of'. Right' so delitith þe feend in þis ordure

[852] ¶ This is þe oþer hond of' þe deuel with fyue fyngres to cacche þe poeple to his vilonye [853] ¶ þe firste fynger is þe foule lokyng' of' þe foule wo*m*man and of' þe foule man þat' sleth right' as a basiliskoc' sleþ folk' by þe venym of' his sight'. For þe coueytise of' eyen folwiþ þe coueytise of' þe herte [854] ¶ The secounde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid manere. and þerfore saith salamon þat' who-so touchith and handelith a wo*m*man: he farith lik' him þat' handelith þe scorpio*un* þat' styngith and sodeinly sleeth þurgh his enuenemynge as who so touchith warm picche. it' schent' his fyngres [855] ¶ The þridde is foule wordes þat' farith lik' fuyr þat' right' anoon brenneþ þe herte [856] ¶ The ferþe is þe kissyng'. and trewely he were a greet fool þat' wolde kisse þe mouth of' a brennyng' ouen or of' a forneys: [857] and more fooles ben þay þat' kyssen in vilonye. For þat' mouth is þe mouþ of' helle. and namely þise olde dotard fooles holours. ȝit' wol þay kisse þough þay may nought do & smater hem. [858] ¶ Certis þay ben like to houndes. For an hound wha*n* he comeþ to a roser or by oþer beautes. þough he may nouȝt' [1]pisse: ȝet' wil he heue vp his leg' and make a countenau*n*ce to pisse. [859] and for þat' many man weneth he may not' synne for licorousnes þat' he doth with his wif': Certis þat' oppinio*un* is fals. God wot' a man may sle himself' wiþ his owne knyf' and mak himself' dronke of' his oughne tonne [860] ¶ Certis be it/ wif' or child or eny worldly þing' þat' he louyth biforn god it' is his maumet' and he is an ydolastre /. [861] man schulde loue his wyf' by discrescioun paciently and attemp*er*elly. and þa*n*ne is sche as it

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were his suster [862] ¶ The fyfte fynger of' the deueles hond is þe stynkynge dede of' leccherie [863] ¶ Certes þe fyue fyngres of' glotonye þe deuel put' in þe wombe of' a man. & his fyue fyngres of' lecchery bygripeth hym by þe reynes for to þrowe him in to þe fourneys of' helle. [864] þere as þey schuln haue þe fuyr. and þe wormes þat' euer schal lasten. and wepyng' and wayling' scharp hunger and þurst'. and grislines of' deueles þat' schul alto-tere hem wiþoute respit/ and wiþouten ende [865] ¶ Of' leccherie as I sayde sourdre*n* diuers spices of' fornicacion þat' is bitwen man and wo*m*man þat' ben nouȝt' maried and þis is dedly synne and against' nature [866] al þat' is enemy and destruccio*un* to nature. [867] par fay þe resoun of' a man telliþ him wel þat' it' is dedly synne For als moche as god forbad leccherie and seint' poule ȝeuith hem þat' regne þat' is due to no wight' but' hem þat' doon synne dedly [868] Anoþer synne of' lecchery is for to bireue a mayden of' hir maydenhede / for he þat' so doþ: Certes he casteth maydenhede out of' the heighest' degre þat' is in þe p*re*sent' lif' [869] and bireuith hir þilke precious fruyt' þat' þe book clepith þe hundrid fruyt'. I can ȝeue it noon oþer name in englisch. but' in latyn it is I-cleped Centesimus fruct*us* se*cun*d*um* Ieronimu*m* contra Iouinian*um* [870] ¶ Certes he þat' so doth is cause of' many harmes and vilenyes mo þan eny man can rekene. Right' as he som tyme is cause of' alle þe damages þat' bestis doon in þe feeld þat' brekith þe hegge or þe closure þurgh which he destroyeþ þat' may not' be restored: [871] for certes no more may maydenhode be restored þan an arm þat' is smyten fro þe body retourne agayn to waxe. [872] sche may haue mercy þis wot' I wel if' sche do penitence but' neu*er* schal it' be þat' sche nas corrupt' [873] ¶ And al be it so þat' I haue spoke som what' of' aduoutre: ȝit' is it good to speke of' mo [1] p*er*ils þat' longen to aduoutre for to eschiewe þat' foule

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synne [874] ¶ Aduoutrie in latyn is for to sayn approching' of' oþer mannes bed þorugh þe which þat' whilom were oon fleisch abounden here bodyes to oþer persones [875] ¶ Of' þis synne as saiþ þe wise man many harmes cometh þer-of' ¶ First' brekyng' of' faith ¶ And certes faith is þe keye of' cristendom. [876] and whan þat faith is broke & lorn: soþely cristendom stont' veyn and wiþouten fruyt' [877] ¶ This synne is eek' a þeef'. For þefte is generally to speke to reue a wight' his þing' agayns his wille [878] ¶ Certis þis is þe foulest' thefte þat' may be whan a womman stelith hir body from hire housbounde and ȝiueth it' to hire holour to defoule hire & stelith hir soule fro crist/ and ȝeuith it' to þe deuel [879] ¶ This is a fouler þefte þan for to breke a chirche and stele chalises. For þese aduouteres breke þe temple of' god spirituelly and stelen þe vessel of' grace þat' is þe body and þe soule ¶ For Ihū crist' schal destroyen hem as saith seint' poule [880] ¶ Sothely þis þefte doutyd gretly Ioseph whan þat' his lordes wyf' prayde him of' vilonye whan he saide. lo my lady how my lord haþ take to me vnder my warde al þat' he haþ in þis world. ne no þing' of' his power is oute of' my power but' oonly ȝe þat' ben his wyf'. [881] and how schuld I do þanne þis wikkidnes and synne so horribly agayns god and my lord. God it forbede ¶ Alas al to litel is suche trouþe now I-founde [882] ¶ The þridde harm is þe filthe þurgh which þay breken þe comaundement' of' god and defoule þe auctour of' here matrimonye þat' is crist'. [883] For certis in so moche as þe sacrament of' mariage is so noble and so digne: So moche is it þe gretter synne for to breke it'. for god makid mariage in paradis in þestat' of' Innocence to multiplie man kynde to þe seruice of' god [884] and þerfore is þe brekyng' þe more greuous. Of' which breking' comeþ fals heires ofte tymes þat' wrongfully occupien mennes heritage. and þerfore wolde crist' putte

hem out' of' þe regne of' heuen þat' is heritage to goode folk'. [885] Of' þis breking' comeþ ek' ofte tyme þat' folk' vnwar wedden or synnen wiþ her kynrede and namely þese harlottis þat' haunten bordels of' þese foule wo*m*men þat' mowe be likened to a comune gonge where as men purgen here entrayles of' her ordure [886] ¶ what' say we ek' of' putours þat' lyuen by þe orrible synne of' putrie & constreyne wy*m*men ȝe som tyme his oughne wyf' or his child as don [1] þese baudes to ȝelde hem a certeyn rente of' here bodily putrie ¶ Certes þese ben cursede synnes [887] ¶ Vnderstonde eek' that' avoutrie is set' gladly in þe ten comaundeme*n*ts bituixe ma*n*-slauȝ*ter* and thefte. For it is grettest' thefte þat' may be. for it is thefte of' body and soule / [888] and it is lik' homicidie For it kerueth a-tuo hem þat' first' were makid oon fleisch. and þ*er*fore by þe olde lawe of' god þay scholde be slayn [889] ¶ But' naþeles by þe lawe of' Ihū crist' þat' is lawe of' pite whan he sayde to þe wo*m*man þat was founde in aduoutri and schulde haue ben slayn w*ith* stoones aftir þe wille of' þe Iewes as was her lawe. Go quod ihū c*rist*' and haue no more wille to synne. or wilne no more to do sy*n*ne. [890] ¶ Sothely þe vengeance of' avouterye is awardid to [. . . . . *no gap*] helle / but' it' be destourbed by penitence [891] ¶ ȝit' ben þer mo spices of' þis cursed synne. as whan þat' oon of' he*m* is religious or ellis bothe or for folk' þat' ben entred in to ordre as subdekin or dekin or prest' or hospitalers and euer þe higher þat' he be. þe gretter is þe synne. [892] þe þinges þat' gretly aggreggith her synne is þe brekyng' of' here avow of' chastite whan þay resceyued ordre. [893] and forþer ouer is soþ þat' holy ordre is chef' of' all*e* þe tresor of' god and his especial signe and mark' of' chastite to schewe þat' þay ben ioyned to chastite which þ*at*' is þe moste precious lif' þ*at*' is [894] ¶ And eek' þese ordred folk' ben specially tytled to god and of' þe

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special meyne of' god of' whiche whan þay don dedly synne þay ben þe special traytours of' god and of' his poeple. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and whil þay ben suche traytours: here prayer auayleþ not' to þe poeple [895] ¶ Prestis ben aungels as by þe dignite of' here misterie ¶ But' forsoþe seint' poul saith þat' Sathanas *tran*sformeth him in aungel of' light'. [896] Soþely þe prest' þat' hauntith dedly synne: he may be likened to þe aungel of' light'. [. . . . . *no gap*] & he semeth aungel of' light': but' for soþe he is aungil of' derknes [897] whiche ben þe sones of' belie as schewith in þe book' of' kinges þat' þay were þe sones of' belial þat' is þe deuel. [898] belial is to say wiþoute Iuge and so faren þay þay þynke hem fre and han no Iuge no more þan hath a fre bole þat' takith which cow þat' him likeþ in þe toun [899] so faren þay by wo*m*men For right' as a fre bole is y-nough for al a to*un*: / Right' so is a wikked prest' corrupcio*un* ynough for al a p*ar*isch or for al a contray [900] ¶ These prestes as saiþ þe book' ne conne not' þe mistery of' presthode. þe poeple ne [1]god ne knowe þay not'. þay holde hem nought' apayed as saith þe book' of' soden fleissh þat' was to hem offred: but' þay tooke by force þe fleissch þat' is raw: [901] Certes so þese schrewes holde he*m* not' appayed with rosted fleissh and sode fleissh wiþ whiche þe poeple feeden hem in gret' reu*e*rence. But þay wil haue raw fleisch of' folkes wyues and here dou3tres [902] ¶ And certes þese wo*m*men þat' consenten to here harlotrie don gret' wrong' to c*ri*st' and to holy chirche and alle halwes / and to alle soules for þay bireuen alle þese hem þat' schulde worschipe crist' and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules [903] ¶ And þerfore han suche prestis & here le*m*mans eeke þat' consenten to here leccherie þe malis*oun* of' al þe court' cristian til þay come to amendeme*n*t

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[904] ¶ The þridde spice of aduoutry is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif and þat is whan þay take noon reward in her assembling but only to þe fleischly delit as saith seint Ierom. [905] and ne rekke of no þing but þat þay be assemblid by cause þat þay ben maried. al is good ynough as þinkith he*m*. [906] But in suche folk haþ þe deuel power as saith þe aungel Raphael to Thoby in here assembly*ng* þay 'putten ihū crist out of her herte. and ȝiuen hemself to alle ordure [907] ¶ The ferthe spice is þe assemble of hem þat ben of here kynrede or of hem þat ben of oon affinite or elles wiþ hem wiþ whiche here fadres or here kynrede han delitid in þe synne of leccherie. þis synne makith hem like houndes þat taken noon heede of kynrede [908] and certes parenteal is in tuo maneres ey*þer* gostly or fleisshly. gostly as for to dele wiþ her gossib. [909] For riȝt / so as he þat engendrith a child is his fleisshly fader: Riȝt so is his godfader his fader espirituel. for which a wo*m*man may in no lasse synne assemble wiþ hir gossib þan wiþ hire oughne fleischly fader or broþ*er* [910] ¶ The fifte spice of þilke abhominable synne of which þat no ma*n* unneþe oughte to speke ne write. naþeles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt/. [911] [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] but þough þat holy writ speke of horrible synne: Certes holy writ may not be defouled no more þan þe sonne þat schyneth on a dongehul [912] ¶ Anoþer synne appertenith to lecchery þat comeþ in sleping. & þis synne comeþ ofte to hem þat ben maydenes and eek to hem þat ben corrupte and þis synne men clepen pollucioun þat cometh in .iiij. maners [913] ¶ Som tyme of languisschynge of body for þe humours ben to ranke and to abunda*u*nt in þe body [1]of man. somtyme of infirmite for þe feblenesse of þe v*er*tu retentyf as phisik makeþ mencio*u*n. And som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke. [914] som tyme of

vileins þoughtes þat' ben enclosed in mannes mynde whan he [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] kepe him wisely or elles may men synne greuously

[*No break in the MS.*]

[915] ¶ Now cometh þe remedye aȝens lecchery and þat' is generally chastite of' wikkedhede and continence þat' restreyneþ alle þe desordeigne moeuynges *þat'* comen of' fleischly talentes. [916] and euer þe gretter meryt' schal he han þat' most restreyneth eschaufynges of' ordure of' þis synne. and þis is *in* þre maneres. þat' is to sayn chastite of' mariage / chastite of/ wickedhede [917] ¶ Now schalt' þou vnderstonde þat' matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of' man and wo*m*ma*n* þat' resceyuen by v*er*tu of' þe sacremen*t*' þe bond þurgh which þay may not be dep*ar*tid in al here lif' þat is to say whil þay lyuen boþe. [918] þis as saith þe boke is a ful gret' sacremen*t*' God makid it / as I haue said in p*ar*adis and wolde himself' be born in mariage [919] and for to holden mariage. he was at' þe weddyng' wher as he turnede watir in to wyn which was þe firste miracle þat' he wrought in erþe biforn his disciples [920] trewe effect' of' mariage clensith fornicacio*un* and replenischith holy chirche of' good lynage. for þat' is þe ende of' mariage and it chaungith dedly synne in to venyal bituixe he*m* þat' ben weddid [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] as wel as þe bodyes [921] ¶ þis is verray mariage þat' was first' blessed by god er þat' þe synne bigan whan naturel lawe was in his first' poynt' in paradis. and it was ordeyned þat/ oo man schulde haue but' oon wo*m*man. and oon wo*m*ma*n* but' oon man as saith seint' augustyn by many reso*u*ns

[922] ¶ First' for mariage is figured bitwixe c*r*ist' and

holy chirche ¶ Anoþ*er* is for a man is heed of' a wo*m*man algate by ordinaunce it/ schulde be so [923] ¶ For if' a wo*m*man had mo men þan oon: þa*n*ne schulde sche haue mo hedes þan oon & þat' were an horrible þing' biforn god. And eek' a wo*m*man: myȝte nouȝt' please to many folk' al at' oones. and also þer ne schulde neuer be pees & rest' among' hem. For euerich wolde aske his oughne þing'. [924] and forþ*er*-ouer no man schulde knowe his oughne engendrure ne who schulde haue his heritage and þe wo*m*man scholde be þe lasse loued fro þe tyme þat sche were ioyned to many men

[925] ¶ Now comeþ how þat' a ma*n* schulde bere him wiþ his wif' and namely in tuo þinges þat' is [1]to sayn in sufferau*n*ce and in reue*r*ence and þat' schewed crist' whan he made first' wo*m*man. [926] For he ne made hire not' of' þe heed of' adam. for sche schulde not' to gret' lordschipe haue / [927] þer as þe wo*m*man haþ þe maistry sche makith to moche disaray. þer nedith noon ensample of' þis. þe exp*er*ience of' þis of' day by day oughte suffice [928] ¶ Also certes god ne made nouȝt' wo*m*man of' þe foot' of' ad*a*m. For sche ne scholde nouȝt' be holden to lowe for sche can not/ paciently suffre ¶ But god made wo*m*ma*n* of' þe ribbe of' adam For wo*m*man schulde be felawe vnto man [929] Man schulde bere him to his wif'. in faith in trouþe and i*n* loue as saiþ seint poule. aman schulde loue his wif' as *crist'* loued holy chirche [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' deyed for it'. so schulde a ma*n* for his wyf if/ it' were neede

[930] ¶ Now how þat' a wo*m*ma*n* schulde be subiect to hir housbonde þat' tellith seint' peter. iij°. c°. first' i*n* obedi*e*nce [931] and eek/ as saiþ þe decre. A wo*m*man þat is a wif' as longe as sche is a wif' sche haþ noon auctorite to swere ne to bere witnesse wiþoute leue of' hir housbonde þat' is hir lord. algate he schulde be so by resoun. [932] sche schulde eek' serue him in al

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honeste and ben attempre of' hir array / I wot' wel *þat'* þay schulde sette here entent' to please her housebondes but' nought' by here queyntise of' array [933] ¶ Seint' Ierom saith þat' wyues *þat'* ben arrayed in silk' and in purpre ne mowe nouȝt' cloþe hem in ihū *crist'* ¶ loke what' saith saint' Iohn̄ eek' in þe same matier [934] ¶ Seint' gregori saith eek' þat' no wight' sekith precious cloþing' ne array but' oonly for veyn glorie to ben honoured þe more biforn þe poeple [935] ¶ It' is a gret' foly a wo*mm*ma*n* to haue fair array outward and hirsilf' to ben foul inward [936] ¶ A wyf' schulde eek' be mesurable in lokyng' and in beryng' and in laugheing' and discrete in all*e* hir wordes. [937] and aboue alle worldly þinges sche schulde loue hir housebonde/ with al hire herte and to him to be trewe of' hir body. [938] so scholde an housebonde eeke ben to his wif'. For sith þat' al þe body is þe housebondes. so schulde here herte ben. or ellis þer is bitwixe hem tuo as in þat' no p*ar*fyt' mariage [939] ¶ Thanne schal men vnderstonde: þat' for þre þinges a man and his wyf' mowe fleischly assemble ¶ The firste is in entent/ of' engendrure of' children to the seruice of' god. for certis þat' is þe cause fynal of' mat*ri*moyne [940] ¶ The secounde cause is to ȝelden eu*er*ych of' hem his dette vn[1]to oþer of' his body ¶ For eu*er*ych of' hem haþ power of' his oughne body ¶ The þridde is for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye. þe ferþe forsoþe is dedly synne. [941] as to þe firste it/ is meritory. The secounde also for as saiþ þe decre þat' sche haþ merit of' chastite þat' ȝeldith to hir housebonde þe dette of' hir body. ȝe þough it/ be agayn hir likyng' and þe lust' of' hir hert' [942] ¶ The þridde maner is venial synne. and trewly scarsly may eny of' þese be wiþoute venial synne for þe corrupcio*un* and for þe delit'. [943] The ferþe maner is for to vnderstonde as if' þay assemble oonly for amorous loue and for noon of' þe forsayde causes, but'

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for to accomplise þilke brennynge delyt' þay rekke neuer how ofte. soþely it is dedly synne and ȝit' wiþ sorwe some folk' wole more peyne hem for to doon þan to her appetit suffiseþ.

[944] the secounde maner of' chastite is to ben a clene wydewe and to eschiew þe embrasynges of' men and desiren þe enbrasynges of' ihū crist' [945] þese ben þo þat' han ben wyues and han forgon here housbondes and eek' wommen þat' han doon leccherie and be relieued by penitence / [946] and certis if' þat' a wyf' couþe kepe hir al chast' by licence of' hir housebonde so þat' sche ȝeue non occasioun þat' he agilt' it' were to hir a gret' merit' [947] ¶ Thise maner wymmen þat' obseruen chastite moste be clene in herte as wel as in body and in þought' and mesurable in cloþing' & in countenaunce. abstinent in etyng' and drynkyng' in speche and in dede. and þanne is sche þe vessel or þe boyst' of' the blessed Magdaleyne þat' fulfillith holy chirche ful of' good odour. [948] ¶ The þridde maner of' chastite is virginite. and it/ bihoueþ þat' sche be holy in herte and clene of' body. and þanne is sche spouse of' ihū crist' and sche is þe lif of' aungels. [949] sche is þe preysyng' of' þis world. and sche is as þese martires in egalite. sche haþ in hir þat tonge þat' tonge may nouȝt' telle. [950] virginite bar oure lord ihū crist' and virgine was himselue

[951] ¶ Anoþer remedy agayns leccherie is specially to wiþdrawe suche þinges as ȝiuen occasioun to þilke vilonye as is ease and etyng' and drynkyng' For certes whan þe pot' boylith strongely, þe beste remedye is to wiþdrawe þe fuyr [952] sleping' eek' in gret' quiete is eek' a greet/ norice vnto leccherie

[953] ¶ Anoþer remedy agayns leccherie [1]is þat' a man or a womman eschiewe þe companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted. for al be it so þat' þe dede be wiþstonde: ȝit' is þer gret' temptacioun

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[954] sothely a whit wal al þough it brenne not fully by stikyng of a candel ȝet is þe wal blak of stiking of a candel ful ofte tyme. [955] I rede þat no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun but he be strenger þan Sampson or holiere þan Dauyd. and wiser þan salamon

[956] ¶ Now after þat I haue declared ȝow þe seuen dedly synnes as I can & some of here braunches and here remedyes: soþely if I couþe I wolde telle ȝow þe ten comaundementes. [957] but so heigh a doctrine I leue to diuines. but/ naþeles I hope to god þay ben touchid in þis litil tretys euerich of hem alle

De secunda parte penitencie [*in margin*]

[958] NOw for as moche as þe secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth as I bigan in þe chapitre I say seint austyn saith. [959] Synne is euery word and euery dede / and al þat men coueyten agayn þe lawe of ihū crist. and þis is for to synne in herte in mouthe and in dede by ȝy fyue wittis þat been. sight heeryng smellyng tastyng or sauoryng or felyng [960] ¶ Now it is good to vnderstonden þe circumstaunces þat aggreggen moche to euery synne. [961] þou schalt considre what þou art þat dost þe synne wheþir þat þou be mal or femal. old oþer ȝong gentil or þral. free or seruaunt hool or seek. weddid or sengle. ordrid. or vnordred wys or fool clerk or seculer [962] if sche of ȝy kyn bodily or gostly or noon. if eny of ȝy kynrede haue synned wiþ hire or noon and many mo þinges

[963] ¶ That oþer circumstaunce is wheþer it be don in fornicacioun or in aduoutry or incest or noon or mayden or noon in maner of homicide or non horrible grete synnes or smale and how longe þou hast continued in synne [964] ¶ The þridde circumstaunce is þe place wher þou hast don synne wheþer in oþer

mennes houses or in þin owne in feld or in chirche or in chirchehawe. in chirche dedicate or noon. [965] For if [. . . . . .

. . . . . .

no gap in the MS.] it be dedicate it is enterdited til it be reconsiled by þe bischop [966] and þe prest scholde be enterdyted þat dede such a vilonye to terme of al his lyf & scholde no more synge no masse and if he dede he schulde do dedly synne at euery tyme þat he song masse [967] ¶ The ferthe circumstaunce is by which mediatours as by which messagers [1]or for entysement or for consentement to bere companye with felawes For many a wrecche for to bere companye wol go to þe deuel of helle. [968] for þay þat eggyn or consentyn to þe synne ben parteneres of þe synne and of þe dampnacioun of þe synnere

[969] ¶ The fyfte is how many tymes þat he haþ synned if it be in his mynde / and how ofte þat he haþ falle. [970] For he þat ofte fallith in synne. despiseþ þe mercy of god and encresceth his synne and is vnkynde to crist and he waxith þe more feble to wiþstonde synne and synneþ þe more lightly [971] and þe latter arrisith and is þe more eschiewe to schriue him. and namely to him þat haþ ben his confessour. [972] For whiche þat folk whan þay falle agayn in here olde folies eyther þay forletin her confessours al vtterly or ellis þay departen here schrifte in diuers places. but soþely such departed schrifte haþ no mercy of god of his synnes [973] ¶ The sixte circumstaunce is why þat a man synneþ as by which temptacioun [. . . . . *no gap*] or by excityng of oþer folk or if he synne wiþ a womman by force or by hir owne assent. [974] or if þe womman maugre hir heed haþ ben enforced or noon. þis schal sche telle. or for coueytise or for pouerte & if it was hire procuryng or noon and alle such maner

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harneys [975] ¶ The .vij. circu*m*staun*c*e is in what' maner he haþ don his synne or how þat' sche haþ suffred þat' folk' han doon to hire. [976] þe same schal þe man telle pleynly alle þe *cir*cumstaunces. and wheþer he haue synned wiþ co*m*mune bordeal wo*m*man or noon. [977] or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon. in fastyng' tyme or noon. or biforn his schrifte of' after his latter schrifte [978] And haþ p*ar* aduenture broken his penaunce enioyned þerfore. by whos help or by whos cou*n*seil by sorcery or by oþer craft' al moste be told [979] ¶ Alle þese þinges after þay be grete or smale engreggen þe consciens of' a man and eek' þe prest' þat' is þe iugge may þe better ben auysed of' his iugement' in ȝiuyng' of' þy penaunce / and þat' is after þy contricio*un*. [980] For vnderstonde wel þat' after þe tyme þat a ma*n* haþ defouled his baptisme by synne if' he wol come to sauacio*un* þer is noon oþer wey but' penitence and schrifte of' mouthe and by satisfaccio*un* [981] and namely by þe tuo. if' þer be a confess*our* to which he may schryue him. and þe þridde if' ȝe haue lif' to p*ar*forme it'.

[982] þa*n*ne schal men loke it' and considre þat' if' he [1]wol make a trewe and a profitable confessio*un* þer moste be foure condicio*un*s [983] ¶ First' it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of' herte as sayde þe king' Eȝechiel to god ¶ I wol remembre me alle þe ȝeres of' my lif' in bitternes of' myn hert'. [984] þis condicioun of' bitternes haþ fyue signes. The first' is þat' co*n*fessio*un* moste be schamefast' not' for to couere ne hyde his synne but' for he haþ agultid his god and defoulid his soule [985] ¶ And herof' saith seint' augustyn. The herte tremblith for schame of' his synne. and for he hath gret' schamefastnes. he is digne to haue gret' mercy of' god. [986] Such was þe confessio*un* of' þe publican þat' wolde nouȝt' heue vp his eyȝen to heuen. For he had offendid god of' heuen For which schamefastnes he had anon þe mercy of' god [987] ¶ And þere seith

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seint' augustyn þat' such schamefast' folk' ben next' forȝeuenes of' remissio*un* [988] ¶ The secou*n*de signe is humilite of' confessio*un* ¶ Of' which saiþ seint petre humblith ȝow vnder þe might' of' god. þe hond of' god is myȝty in confessio*un* For þer-by god forȝiueth þe synnes he alone haþ þe power. [989] and þis humilite schal ben in herte and in signe outward. For right' as he haþ humilite to god *in* his herte: right' so schulde he humble his body outward to þe prest' *þat'* sittith i*n* goddes place [990] For which in no mane*re* sith þat' crist' is sou*er*ayn and þe prest' is his mene and mediatour bitwix crist' and þe synnere and þe synner is þe lasse as by way of' reso*un*: [991] þa*n*ne schulde nouȝt' þe confess*our* sitte as lowe as þe synnere but' þe synnere schulde knele biforn him or at' his feet but' if' maladye destourbid it for he schal take no keep who sittith þere but' in whos place þat' he sitteth. [992] a ma*n* *þat'* haþ trespassed to a lord and cometh for to axe him of' mercy and to maken his accord / and settith him doun anoon by þe lord. men wolde holde him outrageous and not' worþy so soone for to haue mercy ne remissio*un* [993] ¶ The þridde signe is þat' þy schrifte schulde be ful of' teeris if' me*n* may wepe. and if' he may not' wepe wiþ his bodily eyen let' him wepe wiþ his herte. [994] Such was þe confessio*un* of' seint peter. For after he hadde forsake ihū crist'. he wente out' and wepte ful bitterly [995] ¶ The ferthe signe is þat' he lette nouȝt' for schame to schewen his confessio*un*. [996] Such was þe confessio*un* of' þe magdaleyn þat' spared for no schame of' hem þat' were at' þe feste to go to oure lord [1] ihū *crist'* and byknowe to hi*m* hire synne [997] ¶ The fifte signe is þat' a ma*n* or a wo*m*man be obeisaunt/ to resceyue þe pena*u*nce *þat'* him is enioyned. For certis ihū *crist'* for þe gultes of' oon man w*as* obedient' to his deth

[998] ¶ The oþer condicio*un* of' verray co*n*fessio*un* is þat' it' hastily be doon. For certes if' a man had a dedly wou*n*de. euer þe lenger þat' he taried to warisch

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himself: þe more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deþ and eek þe wou*n*de wolde be þe worse to hele [999] ¶ and right so fareþ synne þat long time is in a ma*n* vnschewed [1000] Certes a man oughte soone schewe his synne for many causes as for drede of deth þ*at* comeþ sodeinly and not certeyn what tyme it schal come or ben in what place. and eek þe drecchyng of oon synne draweþ anoþ*er* [1001] and eek þe lenger he tarieþ þe ferþ*er* is he from crist and if he abyde vnto his laste day skarsly may he schriue him or re-me*m*bre him of his synnes or repente for þe greuous malady of his deth [1002] ¶ And for as moche as he haþ not in his lif herkened Ihū crist whan he haþ spoken: he schal crien to ihū crist at his laste day. and scarsly wol he herken him. [1003] And vnderstonde þat þis condicio*un* moste haue foure þinges þy schrifte moste ben p*ur*ueyed byforn and auysed. For wikked haste doþ no p*r*ofyt and þat a man can schryue him of his synnes. be it of pride or of enuye and so forþ alle þe spices and þe c*ir*cumstaunces [1004] and þ*at* he haue comprehendid in his mynde the no*m*bre and þe gretnes of his synne [. . . . . *no gap*] [1005] and eek þat he be contrit of his sinnes and in stedefast p*ur*pos by þe grace of god neuer eft to falle i*n* synne and eek þ*at* he drede and countrewayte himself and þat he flee þe occasiouns of synne to whiche he is enclyned [1006] ¶ Also þat þou schalt schriue þe of alle þin synnes to oon man. and nat a parcel to oon man and a parcel to anoþ*er* ma*n* þat is vnderstonde in entent to parte þy co*n*fessio*un* as for schame or drede. for it nys but strangelyng of þy soule [1007] For certes ihū crist is enterely al good. in him is noon imp*er*feccioun. and þ*er*fore ouþer he forȝiueth al p*ar*fitely or elles neuer a del. [1008] I say nought if þer be assigned to þy penitencer*e* for c*er*tein synne þat þou art bounde to schewe him al þe remena*un*t of þy synnes of whiche

þou hast ben schryuen of þy curate but if it like þe of þin humilite. þis is no departyng of schrifte [1009] ne I ne say not þere as I speke of diuisioun of confessioun [1]þat if þou haue licence to schryue þe to a discret and to an honest prest wher þe likith and eek by þe licence of þy curate þat þou ne maist wel schriue þe to him of alle þyn synnes. [1010] but let no synne be byhinde vntold as fer as þou hast remembraunce. [1011] and whan þou schalt þe schriue to þi curate: telle him eeke al þy synne þat þou hast doo sith þou were last I-schryue. þis is no wikkid entent of diuisioun of schrifte

[1012] ¶ Also þy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condicioùns. First þat þou schriue þe by þy fre wille nouȝt constreyned ne for schame of folk ne for maladye or such þing. for is resoun þat he þat trespassith wiþ his fre wille [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] confesse his trespas. [1013] noon oþer man schal telle his synne but himself. ne he schal not nayte or denye his synne ne wraþþe him with þe prest for his amonestynge to lete synne [1014] ¶ The secounde condicioun is þat þy schrifte be laweful þat is to sayn þat þou þat schriuest þe and eek þe prest þat herith þy confessioun ben verrayly in þe feith of holy chirche [1015] and þat a man be nought despaired of þe mercy of Ihū crist/ as caym or Iudas. [1016] and eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespas and not another: but he schal blame and wite himself and his oughne malice of his synne / and noon other [1017] ¶ But naþeless if þat anoþer man by occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne or þat þe estate of a persone be such þurgh which his synne aggreggith or elles þat he may not playnly schryue hym but he telle þe persone wiþ which he haþ synned þanne may he telle it [1018] so þat his entent be nouȝt to bakbyte þe persone: but oonly to declare his confessioun

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[1019] Thow schalt' nouȝt' eke make no lesyng' in þy confessio*un* for humilite [. . . *no gap*] to sayn þ*at'* þou hast' don synnes of' whiche þou were neuer gulty [1020] as seint augusty*n* saiþ ¶ If' þou by cause of' humilite makest' lesyng*es* on þiself'. þough þou were not' in synne biforn ȝit' art' þou þ*a*nne in synne þurgh þy lesynges [1021] ¶ Thou most' schewe þy synne by þyn oughne p*ro*pre mouth but' þ*o*u woxe dombe. and not by no lettre. for þou þat hast' don þe synne þou schalt' haue þe schame. [1022] þou schalt nouȝt' peynte þy confessio*un* by faire subtil wordes to couer þe more þy synne for þanne bigilist' þou þiself' and not' þe prest'. þou most' telle it' platly be it neuer so foul ne so horrible. [1023] þou schalt' eek/ schriue þe to a prest' þat' is discrete to counsaile þe ¶ And þou schalt' nouȝt' schryue þe for [1]veinneglorie ne for ypocrisie. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [1024] ¶ þou schalt' not' eek' renne to þe prest' sodeinly to telle him lightly þy synne as who-so tellith a tale or a iape. but' auysily and wiþ gret' deuocio*un*: [1025] and gen*e*rally schriue þe ofte. if' þou ofte falle: ofte þou aryse by confessioun [1026] ¶ And þough þou schryue þe ofter þan oones of' synne of' which þ*o*u hast' ben schriuen: it is þe more merite and as saith seint augusty*n* ¶ Thou schalt' haue þe more lightly relessyng' and g*r*ace of' god bothe of' synne and of' payne. [1027] and certes oones a ȝer atte atte lest/ way it is laweful to be houselyd. For sothely oones a ȝer alle þinges renouelen

[*No break in the MS.*]

[1028] ¶ Now haue I told of' verray confessiou*n* þat' is the secounde partye of' penitence

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[1029] ¶ **De tercia parte penitencie**

The þridde partye of penitence is Satisfaccioun and þat standith generally in almes dede and bodily peyne [1030] ¶ Now ben þer [. . . .] of almes dede ¶ Contricioun of herte where a man offereþ himself to god ¶ The secounde is . to haue pite of þe defaute of his neighebor ¶ The þridde is. in good counseil and comfort gostly and bodily where men han neede and namely in sustenaunce of mennes foode. [1031] and take keep þat a man haþ neede of [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] cloþing and herberwe. he haþ [. . . . .] charitable counseil and visityng in prisoun and malady. and sepulture of his dede body [1032] ¶ And if þou may not visite þe needeful wiþ þy persone visite by þy message and by þy ȝiftes. [1033] þese ben general almesses or werkes of charite of hem þat han temporal riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of þese werkes schalt þou hieren at þe day of doom

[1034] þis almes schalt þou doon of þin oughne propur þinges and hastily and priuely if þou maist. [1035] But naþeles if þou maist not do priuely þou schalt nouȝt forbere to do almes þoughh men se it / so þat it be nouȝt don for þank of þe world but oonly for þonk of ihū crist [1036] ¶ For as witnessith seint Mathewe .v^to^. ¶ A cite may not ben hid þat is set on a mountayn ne non lighh not a lanterne and put it vnder a buisschel but men sette it on a candel stikke to lighte þe men in þe hous. [1037] Right so schal ȝoure light lighten biforn men þat men may se ȝoure goode werkes and glorifien ȝoure fader þat is in heuen

[1038] ¶ Now as to speke of bodily peyne. it is in prayere in wakinges in fastynges. in vertuous

techinges of' orisouns. [1039] ȝe schul vnderstonde þat' orisoun or prayeres is for to seyn a pitous wil of' herte þat' redresseþ in god and expressith it' by word outward to remembre harmes and to haue þinges espirituel & [1]durable and som tyme temporel þinges of' whiche orisouns of' þe orisoun of' þe pater noster haþ oure lord ihū crist' enclosed most' þinges [1040] ¶ Certis it is priuileged of' þre þinges in his dignite [. . . . . *no gap*] þan any oþer prayer. For ihū crist' himself' maked it'. [1041] and it' is schort' for it' schulde be coud þe more lightly. and forto wiþholde it' þe more esily in herte and helpe himselfe þe oftere with þe orisoun [1042] and for a man schulde be þe lasse wery to say it. and for a man may not' excuse him to lerne it'. it is so schort' and so easy and for it comprehendith in it' self' alle goode prayeres [1043] ¶ The exposicioun of' þis holy praier þat' is so excellent' and so digne. I bitake to þese maystres of' theology. saue þus moche wol I sayn whan þou prayest/ þat' god schulde forȝiue þe þy gultes as þou forȝiuest' hem þat' þey gulten to þe: be ful wel war. þat' þou be not' out of' charite. [1044] þis holy orisoun amenisith eek' venial synne. and þerfore it appendith specially to penitence.

[1045] þis praier moste be trewely sayd and in verray faith. and þat' men pray to god ordinatly and discretly & deuoutly and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subiect/ to þe wille of' god [1046] ¶ þis orisoun moste eek' be sayd wiþ greet' humblesse and ful pure honestly and nouȝt' to þe annoyaunce of' eny man or womman ¶ It' most' eek' be continued with þe werkis of' charite. [1047] hit' auaylith agayns þe vices of' þe soule / as seiþ seint' Ierom ¶ By fastyng' ben saued þe vices of' þe soule.

[1048] ¶ After þis þou schalt' vnderstonde þat' bodily peyne stant' in wakyng'. for ihū crist' saith ¶ wakith and prayeth þat' ȝe ne entre not'/ in to

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temptacioun. [1049] ȝe schul vnderstonde þat fastynge stont in þre þinges ¶ In forbering of bodily mete and drink. and in forberyng of worldly iolite. and in forbering of worldly synne. þis is to sayn þat a man schal kepe him fro dedly synne in al þat he may

[1050] ¶ And þou schalt vnderstonde eek þat god ordeyned fastyng. and to fastyng appurteynen foure þinges [1051] ¶ largesce to pouer folk. gladnes of hert espirituel. not to ben angry ne annoyed ne grucche for he fastith. and also resonable hour for to ete. ete by mesure þat is to sayn a man schulde not ete in vntyme ne sitte þe lenger at his mete for he fastith

[1052] ¶ Thanne schal þou vnderstonde þat bodily peyne stant in discipline or teching by word or by writyng or by ensample. Also in heires weryng or of stamyn or of habeiouns on her naked fleisch for cristes sake and suche maner penaunce [1053] ¶ But ware þe wel þat such maner penaunce [1]of þyn fleissh make nouȝt þin herte bitter or angry or anoyed of þiself. for better is to cast away þin hayre þan for to caste away þe swetnes of ihū crist. [1054] and þerfor seiþ seint poule ¶ Clothe ȝow as þay þat ben chosen of god in herte of misericorde debonairete. sufferaunce and such maner of cloþing. of þe which ihū crist is more appayed þan of haires or of hauberkis

[1055] ¶ þan is eek in knokkyng on þe brest. in scourgyng wiþ ȝerdes. in knelynges. in tribulaciouns [1056] in suffring paciently wronges þat ben doon to him/ and eek in pacient sufferaunce of maledies or lesyng of worldly catel or of wif. or of child or of oþir frendes

[1057] ¶ Thanne schalt þou vnderstonde whiche þinges destourben penaunce / and þis is in foure þinges. þat is. drede. schame. hope. and wanhope. þat is desperacioun [1058] ¶ And for to speke first/ of drede for which he

weneth þat' he may suffre no penaunce. [1059] þer agayns is remedye for to þinke þat' bodily penaunce is but schort' and litel at þe regard of' þe peyne of' helle þat' is cruel and so long' þat' it/ lastith wiþouten ende

[1060] ¶ Now agains þe schame *þat'* a man haþ to schryue him and namely þese ypocrites þat' wolde be holde so parfyt' þat' þay haue no meede to schriue hem. [1061] agayns þat schame schulde a man þinke þat' by way of' resoun þat' he hath not' ben aschamed to do foule þinges. Certis him oughte not' ben aschamed to doon faire þinges & goode þinges and þat is confessioun [1062] ¶ And man scholde eek' þinke þat' god seeth alle þy þoughtes and þy werkes to him may no þing' be hyd ne couered [1063] men schulde eek' remembre hem of' þe schame þat is to come at/ þe day of' doom to hem þat' ben nought' penitent' and schriuen in þis present lif'. [1064] For alle þe creatures in heuen ne in erthe and in helle schuln seen apertly al þat' he hydith in þis world

[1065] ¶ Now for to speke of' hem þat' ben so negligent' and slowe to schryue hem stant' in tuo maneres [1066] ¶ þat' oon is. þat' he hopith for to lyue longe and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt'. and þanne he wol schriue him. and as he saith he may as him semith tymely ynough come to schrifte [1067] ¶ Another is of' þe Surquidie þat' he haþ in cristes mercy [1068] ¶ Agains þe firste vice he schal þinke þat' oure lif' is in no sikernesse. and eek' *þat'* al þe riches in þis world ben in aduenture and passen as a schadowe on þe wal [1069] and as saith seint' Gregory *þat'* it' apperteyneth to þe grete rightwisnes of' god þat' neuer schal þe [1]peyne stynte of' hem þat' neuer wolde wiþdrawe hem fro synne her þankes. but' ay continue in synne for þilke perpetuel wille to doon synne. schul þay haue perpetuel peyne

[1070] ¶ wanhope in tuo maneres is. þe firste wanhope is in þe mercy of' crist' ¶ That' oþer is þat' þay

[1 *leaf* 235, *back*]

þinke þay mighte nought longe *per*seuer in goodnesse [1071] ¶ The firste wanhope comeþ of' þat' he demyth þat' he synned so highly and so ofte and so longe layn in synne þat' he schal not' be saued [1072] ¶ Certis aȝens þat cursed wanhope schulde he þenke þat' þe passio*un* of Ihū crist' is more strong' for to vnbynde þan synne is strong' for to bynde [1073] ¶ Agains þe secou*n*de wanhope he schal þinke þat' als ofte as he fallith ⸗ he may arise agayn by penitence / And þough he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne ⸗ þe m*er*cy of' crist' is alway redy to resceyue him to mercy [1074] ¶ Agains þe wanhope þat' he demeth þat' he þinkith he schulde not' longe p*er*seuere in goodnesse. he schal þinke þat' þe febles of' þe deuel may no þing' doon but' men wol suffre him. [1075] And eek' he schal haue strengþe of' þe help of' god and of' al holy chirche and of' þe protecci*o*un of' aungels if' him list'

[1076] ¶ Thanne schal men vnderstonde what is þe fruyt' of' penau*n*ce And aft*er* þe word of' iħū *cr*ist' ¶ hit is þe endeles blisse of' heuen [1077] þer ioye haþ no contrariete of' wo ne of' penaunce ne greuaunce. þer alle harmes ben passed of' þis p*r*esent' lif'. ther as is þe sikernesse fro þe peyne of' helle. [. . . . . [1078] . . . . . .

no gap in the MS.] þere as is þe body of' man þat' whilom was seek. frel and feble and is immortal. and so strong' and so hool þ*at*' þer may no þ*ing*' empeire it'. [1079] þer nys neyþer honger þurst' ne colde. but' eu*er*y soule replenisched wiþ þe sight' and þe p*ar*fyt' knowyng' of' god [1080] ¶ This blisful regne may men purchace by pouerte espirituel and þe glorie by lowenes. þe plente of' ioye by hunger and þurst' and reste by t*ra*uaile and þe lif' by deth and mortificacioun of' synne.

[*Small break in the MS.*]

¶ Preces de Chauceres./

[1081]

NOw pray I to ȝow alle þat heren þis litel tretis or reden þat if þer be any þing þat likes hem þat þer-of þay þanke oure lord ihū crist of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes [1082] ¶ And if þer be eny þing þat displesith hem I pray hem þat þay arette it to þe defaute of myn vncon*n*ny*ng* [1]and not to my wille þat wolde fayn haue sayd better if I hadde co*n*nyng [1083] ¶ For þe book saiþ. al þat is writen. for oure doctrine is writen [. . . . . *no gap*] [1084] For I biseke ȝow mekely for þe m*er*cy of god þat ȝe p*ra*y for me þat god haue m*er*cy on me and forȝeue me my giltes [1085] and nameliche my t*ra*nslacio*un*s and of enditynng/ in worldly vanitees. whiche I reuoke in my retracciou*n*s [1086] as is þe book of troyles. þe book also of fame. þe book of .29. ladies þe book of þe duchesses. þe book of seint valentines day and of þe p*ar*liment of briddes. þe Tales of Cauntur-bury alle þilke þat sounen in to synne [1087] þe book Many of þe leo. and oþer bokes if þay were in my mynde / or remembrau*n*ce and many a song and many a leccherous lay. Of þe whiche crist for his grete m*er*cy forȝiue me þe synnes [1088] ¶ But of þe t*ra*nslacio*un* of boce de consol*aci*one and oþ*er* bokes of consolac*ioun* and of legend of lyues of seintes and omelies and moralitees and of deuocio*un*. [1089] that þanke I oure lord ihū crist and his moder and alle þe seintes in heuen [1090] bisekyng hem þat þay fro hennysforth vn-to my lyues ende sende me g*ra*ce to biwayle my gultes and to studien to þe sauacio*un* of my soule and g*ra*unte me grace and space of verray repenta*u*nce.

[1 *leaf* 286]

penitence. confessio*un*. and satisfaccio*un*. to don in þis p*re*sent' lif' [1091] þurgh þe benigne g*ra*ce of' him þat' is king' of' kynges and prest' of' alle prestis þat' bought' vs wiþ his precious blood of' his hert': [1092] So þat' I moote be oon of' hem at' þe day of' doom that' schal be sauyd *Qui* cu*m* p*at*re.

APPENDIX

TO THE HARLEIAN MS 7334

OF AN END-LINK, HYMN, AND CUTS, NOT IN THE MS.

PAGE

1. The genuine *Nun's Priest's End-Link*, Group B, § 15, from MS Reg. 17 D xv, Brit. Mus. ... 694
   ('Twould have followd p. $\frac{309}{577}$ above, had it been in the Harleian MS.)

2. The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk Nicholas, "*Angelus ad Virginem*" (A 3216, p. 92 abuv), from the Arundel MS 248, ab. 1250-60 A.D., in English and Latin; a facsimile and a print 695

3. Woodcuts of the Paintings of the 23 *Tellers of the Canterbury Tales* copied from the Ellesmere MS, and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper.

4. Woodcuts of 6 *Tellers of* 6 *of the Canterbury Tales* — the Reeve, Cook, Wife of Bath, Pardoner, Monk, and Manciple,—and of 6 *Allegorical Figures for the Parson's Tale*,— Envy and Charity, Gluttony and Abstinence, Lechery and Chastity,—copied from MS Gg. 4. 27 in the Cambridge University Library, and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper.

1.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S END-LINK.

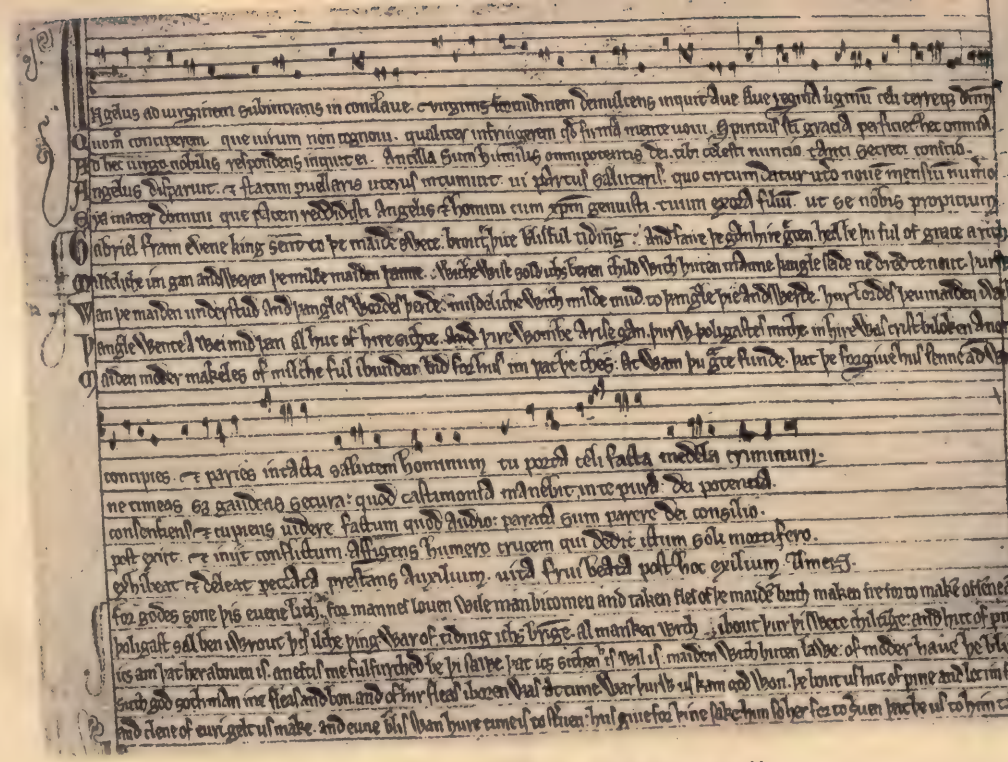
[*MS Reg.* 17 *D xv.*, *leaf* 284 (*paper*, ? 1460).]

[Sir Nonnes prist'. our host' sayde anon
I-blessid be thy breche. and eu*er*y stoon
This was a mery tale of' chauntilier
But' be my trowth̄ if' thow were a seculer 4640
Thow woldest' bien. a tredefoule aright'
For if' thow have corage. as thow hast' myght'
The were nede. of' hennys as I wene
Ya̅ mo than .vij. tymes. seventene 4644
Se whiche brawnes. hath̄ this gentil prist'
So grete a nekke. and so large a brist'
He lokith̄ as a sp*ar*hawke. with̄ his Ien
Hym nedith̄ nat'. his colours for to dyen 4648
With̄ brasil ne with̄ grayne of' portyngale
Now s*ir* faire fal yow. for youre mery tale
And after that' he. with̄ ful myrry chiere
Sayde vnto another as ye chul here

Here endith̄ the tale of' þe none prest/]

[MS Reg. 17 D xv *extract stops*]

["the p*r*olog' of' the Mauncipie" *follows in MS Reg.* 17 *D xv.*]



"ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM"

THE HYMN OF CHAUCER'S OXFORD CLERK: MILLER'S TALE. GROUP A. §. 4. L. 3216.

BRIT. MUS. ARUNDEL M.S. 248, LEAF 154.—AB. 1250-60 A.D.

2.

The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk,

NICHOLAS,

"*ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM.*"

(Miller's Tale, Group A. l. 3216, p. 92, abuv.)

ENGLISHT (rymes *ababcc*, *dde*, *cec*).
Arundel MS. 248, leaf 154. Ab. 1250-60, A.D.

1

Gabriel fram evene king
sent to þe maide swete,
broute[1] þire blisful tiding,
And faire þe gan hire *gr*eten: 4
"Heil be þu, ful of grace arith!
"for godes sone, þis evene lith, 6
"[2]for mannes louen,
"wile man bicomen,
"and taken 9
"fles of þe, maide*n* brith,
"ma[*n*]ken fre for to make*n*
"of se*n*ne a*n*d deules mith." 12

2

Mildeliche im gan andsweren
þe milde maiden þanne:
'wiche wise sold ichs beren
child with-huten manne?' 16
Þangle seide, "ne dred te nout!
"þurw þoligast sal ben iwrout 18
"þis ilche þing,
"warof tiding
"ichs bri*n*ge: 21
"al manken wrth ibout
"þur þi swete chilti*n*ge,
"and hut of pine ib*r*out." 24

THE LATIN ORIGINAL:
'*ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM.*'

1

Angelus ad uirginem
subintrans in conclaue,
Virginis formidinem
demulcens inquit, "Aue!
"Aue regina ui*r*ginu*m*!
"celi terreq*ue* d*omin*u*m*
"concipies,
"& paries,
"intacta,
"salutem hominum,
"tu, porta celi facta,
"medela criminum."

2

'Quom*od*o conciperem,
'que uirum non cognoui?
'qualiter infringerem
'q*uo*d firma mente uoui!'
"Spiritus *sanct*i gracia
"perficiet hec omnia.
"ne timeas,
"*sed* gaudeas
"secura,
"quod castimonia
"manebit in te pura,
"dei potencia."

[1] *e* is an overline insertion. In lines 3, 4, 26, 28, 53, 60, &c. the 'þ' of þe, þire, þie, þerde, &c. stands for 'h'.

[2] A later overline 'so' is before 'for'; but the line should be only 2 measures.

3

Wan þe maiden understud, 25
and þangles wordes þerde,
mildeliche, with milde mud,
to þangle þie andswerde: 28
'Hure lordes þenmaiden iwis
'ics am, þat her abouen is; 30
'aneftis me
'fulfurthed be
'þi sawe, 33
'þat ics, sithen [1]his wil is,
'maiden, with-huten lawe,
'of moder haue þe blis.' 36

3

Ad hec, uirgo nobilis
respondens, inquit ei,
'Ancilla sum humilis
'omnipotentis dei,
'tibi celesti nuncio
'tanti secreti conscio,
'consentiens
'& cupiens
'uidere
'factum quod audio,
'parata sum parere
'dei consilio.'

4

Þangle wente a-wei mid þan,
al hut of hire sichte;
and[2] þire wombe arise gan,
þurw þoligastes mithe; 40
in hire was crist biloken anon,
suth god, soth man, ine fleas and bon;
and of hir fleas
iboren was
at time, 45
war-þurw us kam god won,
þe bout us hut of pine,
and let im for us slon.[3] 48

4

Angelus disparuit,
& statim puellaris
uterus intumuit,
ui partus salutaris,
quo circumdatur ut*ero*
noue*m* mensiu*m* num*ero*;
post exiit,
& iniit
conflictum,
affigens humero
crucem qui dedit ictum
soli mortifero.

5

Maiden moder makeles,
of milche ful ibunden,
Bid for hus, im þat þe ches,
at wam þu g*r*ace funde, 52
þat þe forgiue hus senne a*n*d wrake,
and clene of euri gelt us make, 54
and eune blis,
wan hure time is
to st*er*uen, 57
hus giue, for þine sake,
him so her for to s*er*uen,
þat þe us to him take. 60

5

Eya mater domini
que pacem reddidisti
Angelis & homini
cum *Christu*m genuisti,
tuum exora filium,
ut se nobis propicium
exhibeat,
& deleat
peccata,
prestans auxilium,
uita frui beata,
post hoc exilium. AmeN.

[1] 'h' is an overline insertion.
[2] 'and' underdotted and struck through: but see '&' in Latin, st. 4. l. 2.
[3] The 'n' is a taild final *n*, like a *y*.

3.

WOODCUTS OF THE

PAINTINGS OF THE 23 TELLERS OF THE CANTERBURY TALES

COPIED FROM

THE ELLESMERE MS

AND CUT BY

Mr W. H. HOOPER.

THE KNYGHT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 14.

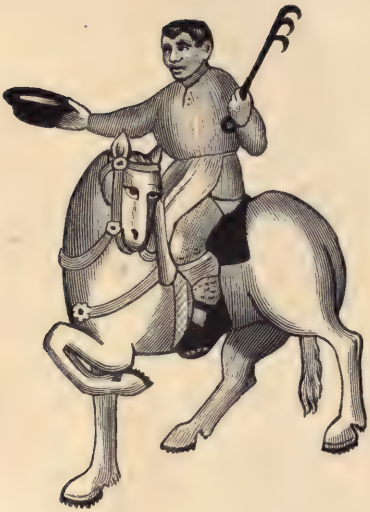
(The brand on the horse's hip—M, ? for *Miles*—
is in ink, and probably by a later hand.

THE MILLERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 38, back.

THE REVE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 46.



THE COOK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 51.

THE MAN OF LAWE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 54, back.

THE SHIPMAN.

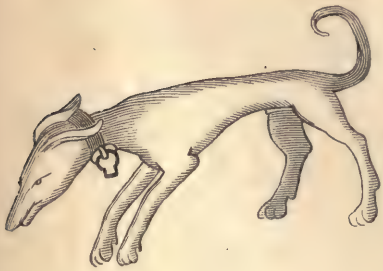
Ellesmere MS, leaf 147, back.

THE PRIORESSE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 152, *back.*

CHAUCER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 157, *back.*



THE MONK.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 173.

THE NONNES PREEST.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 183.

THE DOCTOR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 137.

THE PARDONER.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 142.

THE WYF OF BATHE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 76.

THE FRERE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 80, *back.*

THE SOMONOUR.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 85, back.

THE CLERK OF OXENFORD.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 92.

THE MERCHANT.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 106, *back.*

THE SQUIRE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 119, *back.*

THE FRANKLIN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 127, *back.*

THE SECOND NUN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 191.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 198.

THE MANCIPLE.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 207.

THE PARSON.

Ellesmere MS, leaf 210, *back.*

[These coloured figures in the Ellesmere MS have evidently been drawn by two different persons. The little pieces of ground on which the later hand places his figures, mark those done by him.

His drawing is not so good as the first hand's; and his colours are badly ground, and of poor quality.—W. H. HOOPER.]

4.

DRAWINGS OF

6 TELLERS OF 6 CANTERBURY TALES

AND 6 ALLEGORICAL FIGURES

FOR THE *PARSON'S TALE*

(BEING ALL THAT WERE NOT CUT OUT OF THE MS. BY SOME SCOUNDREL).

COPIED FROM MS. Gg. 4. 27, IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, CAMBR.

AND CUT ON WOOD BY

MR W. H. HOOPER.

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1. REEVE. 2. COOK. 3. WIFE OF BATH. 4. PARDONER.
5. MONK. 6. MANCIPLE.

ALLEGORICAL FIGURES.

7, 8. ENVY AND CHARITY. 9, 10. GLUTTONY AND ABSTINENCE.
11, 12. LECHERY AND CHASTITY.

THE REEVE.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 186.

THE COOK OF LONDON
(with a raw on his Horse's ribs).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 192, *back.*

THE WIFE OF BATH.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 222.

THE PARDONER
(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 306.

THE MONK
(without his Bells and Hounds).

MS. Gg. 4. 27, *Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf* 332.

THE MANCIPLE.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 395.

ENVY
(on his Wolf gnawing a Bone).

CHARITY
(with her wingd and flaming Heart).

Parson's Tale.

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 416.

GLUTTONY AND ABSTINENCE. *Parson's Tale.*

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 432.

LECHERY (with her Goat and Sparrow), and CHASTITY (trampling on the Dragon of Lust). *Parson's Tale.*

MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 433.

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